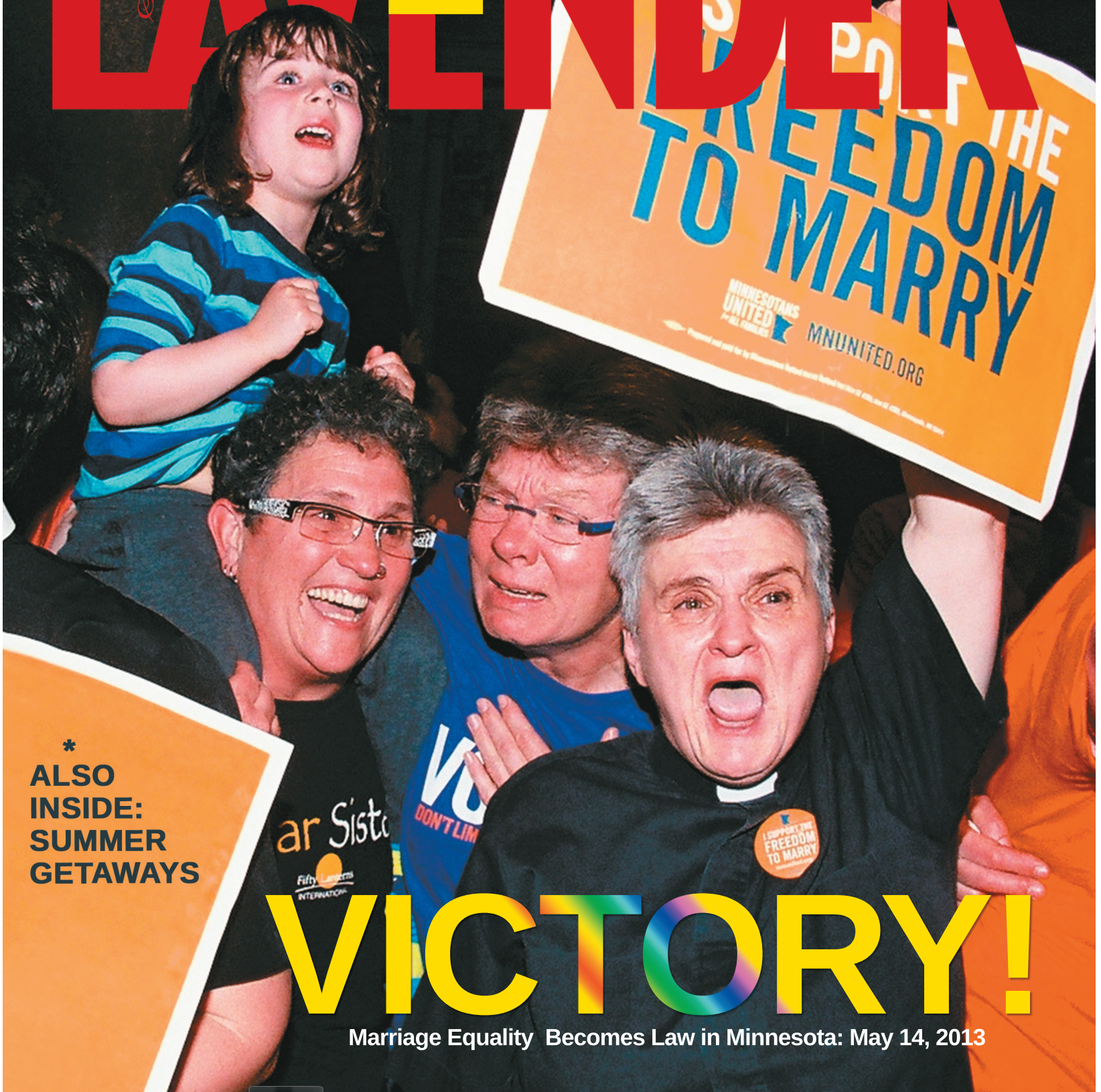


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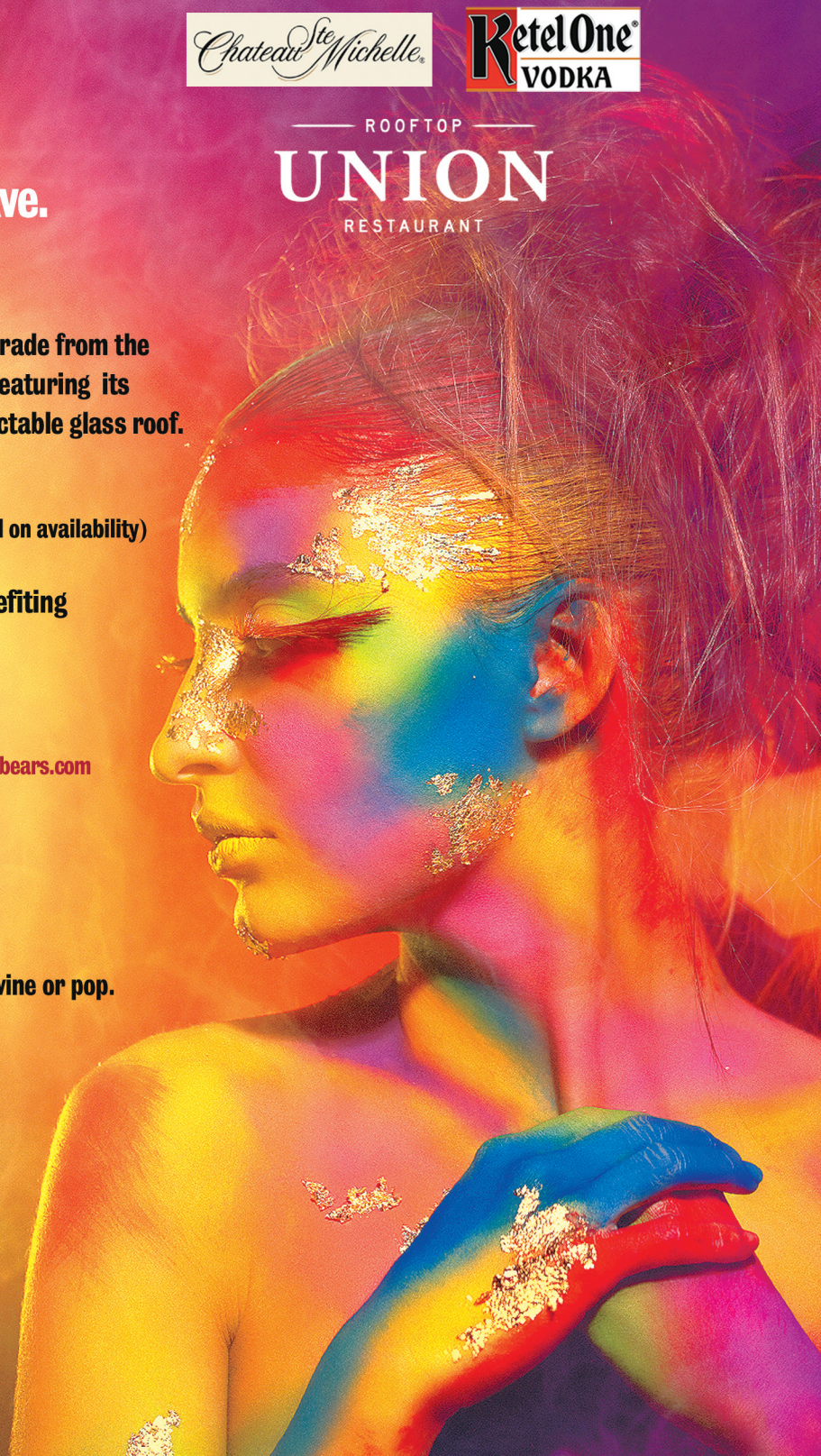
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ON THE COVER

Emotions ran high as history was made when Marriage Equality was achieved in Minnesota in a series of days, May 9-14, 2013.

Photo by Sophia Hantzes

CORRECTIONS FOR ISSUE 469

Photo credit was omitted in the interview with ex-Viking Chris Kluwe (p. 56). Photos were by Sophia Hantzes.

Big Gay News erroneously listed stories in Minnesota and Oregon (p. 58) as being in Pennsylvania.

Photo by Joy Summers

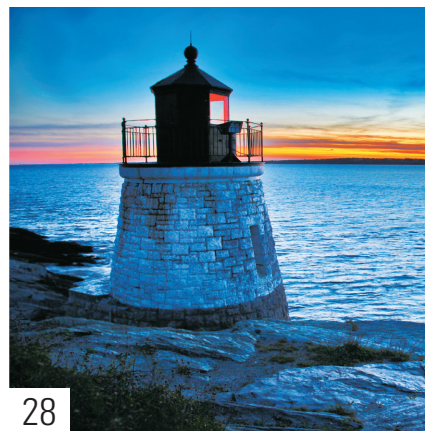


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Don't Stop Believin'

I REMEMBER the music that was playing as we waited for the results on Election Night in 2012. All of us stood for hours at the Election Night Party with Minnesotans United for All Families, watching the big screens with various news stations reporting the results. Collectively, the group would exclaim in excitement or groan in worry. I noted the music selections three times that night. First, I can recall that I was watching both the photographers from the media outlets as well as the crowd when Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive" came on over the loudspeaker. In one sweeping motion, all of the photographers turned themselves to the crowd, but the crowd wasn't paying attention. Some folks were singing along quietly, but the photographers may have been disappointed that nobody started disco dancing. Then, when Macklemore and Ryan Lewis's "Same Love" came on, there was a bit more excitement from the crowd, but not on a large scale. Finally, when we found out that the amendment had failed and discrimination would not be written into Minnesota's Constitution, the song that immediately started the room singing was "Don't Stop Believin'" by Journey.

Today, six months after that night, same-sex marriage was signed into law by Governor Dayton and will be legal as of August 1, 2013.

We didn't stop believing.

Looking back on months and months of writing about rights, love, equality, amendments, cognitive dissonance, politics, swag, and all-things-wedding, it's been a roller coaster of thoughts, faith, events, rallies, phone calls, fatigue, emails, arguments, and empathy. A large-scale campaign turned into a small-scale lobbying effort. A victory turned into a victory. A conversation continued and included a great number of topics for both the community as well as the whole state of Minnesota.

Kudos and congratulations to all. Everyone played a role.

Some roles were obvious and prescribed. Minnesotans United for All Families and the other activists involved with other groups—Project 515, OutFront MN, HRC, etc.—had the mission to get the freedom to marry in Minnesota in 2013, not anything less than that. Go big or go home. It was the role, the *raison d'être*, of the organization to stay focused on marriage, period. Messages were all about marriage. Funds were for marriage. Press was for marriage. Nothing but marriage. If they'd said, "Sure, you know, if you don't stretch for marriage this year, civil unions would be okay," there wouldn't have been a campaign. The message was love, with rights.

As the independent and nonpartisan GLBT media, Lavender couldn't and did—say that this community required *something* of our legislators this year, ultimately marriage. Our role was to push the issue and hold both organizations as well as elected, public legislators accountable. We wanted marriage equality for this community and it was the sole power of the legislators to give it. In representing a large and diverse GLBT audience, it was crucial to maintain empathy with people who already had love, but need rights this year. People who need these rights will die before the end of the next legislative session in 2014—so if rights didn't happen in 2013 by way of marriage, they needed to happen by way of civil unions as a stopgap. The message was rights, with love.

Our roles were different. Each organization and person came from a different perspective and played their roles differently. Tactics were based in theory, but none of us have done this before, so we didn't have a script. If we could've purchased a formula or game plan for winning marriage equality in Minnesota, it would've made fundraising a whole lot easier. We've learned that this lobbying effort took \$2 million dollars—cheap! Had we known that would be the price tag for marriage equality in Minnesota, we'd have emptied our pockets. But it wasn't

quite that simple. Even now, after the victory, it'd be difficult to prescribe how another state could do what Minnesota did, with a positive, pro-marriage lobbying effort that followed a negative, anti-amendment campaign. The efforts started well before 2012 and has cost people in this community so much more than money. And, we don't know what the turning point was for each legislator in how they decided to vote—their, and their reasons, are as diverse as our community.

Thinking the people who were at the Capitol when the Governor Dayton signed the freedom to marry into law, we all had different roles and perspectives. To speak rather broadly about the demographic groups, some of the people were of the prevalent, powerful class who are accustomed to closed-door meetings and lobbying...while other people were less powerful and completely unfamiliar with having anyone work behind the scenes on their behalf, let alone come out of a closed-door meeting with their best interests in mind. Some had faith that quiet progress was being made, some wondered where the demonstrations and loud clanging cymbals were. Some folks were those who volunteered to raise money and make phone calls, given a script that was proven to be successful in its tactics. Others in the crowd were the recipients of such phone calls who either agreed to give money or had a difficult time getting off the phone with the fundraisers because those successful scripts were relentless. Some of the community never want to get married, others have been waiting for decades to do so. Some didn't think it'd ever happen, some knew it was only a matter of getting to the vote and it'd be a done deal. Some wore their hearts on their sleeves for the past two years, others are still in the closet.

No matter what our roles or perspectives or organizations, each person contributed to this victory. It is with empathy and the ability to put ourselves in the each other's shoes that we can find unity even in disparity. Victory can be enjoyed by all, because equality was won for all. And, to think back on Chris Kluwe's statements on empathy in the last issue, we can stay strong as a community by being able to empathize with each other, just as we ask the larger society to empathize with us. Doing so is crucial to our survival and future as a community within a larger society. Just as we stood together on the lawn at the Capitol knowing we all had different perspectives and roles in this campaign, we were all there together. Unified.

I went to the Capitol that day with my friend, Amanda, and her son, Will. Will is two-and-a-half years old and narrated our walk from Cathedral Hill saying things like, "A-A-Andy...we're going to cross Oxford, next." He knew the streets of St. Paul already. I was impressed. He kept wondering if he'd get to "talk to Mark Dayton." He held the sign his mother made saying, "MARRIAGE EQUALITY IS GOOD FOR OUR CHILDREN."

He will not know these years before all loving couples in Minnesota were allowed the freedom to marry. I cry with relief for Will and all the children who won't know a time when this community was fighting for the right to marry just as my generation doesn't know a time when this community was defined as having a mental disorder or illness. But, knowing that these times existed will help our group empathy as we proceed into the next eras and fight for more rights.

There was no soundtrack to that hour at the Capitol when history was made, no singing along to "Don't Stop Believin'" by Journey. But, we marched to downtown St. Paul from the Capitol to the beats of a drumline with police officers stopping traffic and embraced a new anthem, "Love is the Law."

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There's (Still) a Long, Long Trail

This won't be fresh news when this issue hits the stands, but it's still Big News. Tuesday, May 14, Minnesota became the twelfth state to legalize same-sex marriage as Governor Mark Dayton signed the bill to become the law on August 1.

"What a day for Minnesota!" he exulted from the capitol steps, cheered by a crowd some six thousand strong while rainbow flags flew from the temporarily renamed Wabasha Street Freedom to Mary Bridge.

I've yet to see announcements of divorce by straight couples whose marriages have been ruined by the passing of the law. Perhaps seeing their gay neighbors marry and continue to go to jobs, raise families and generally act like regular folks will ease their fears, perhaps not, but nevertheless, the law will be in effect.

There is still, in many quarters, the misconception that GLBT people want more or different rights. It is difficult as one who already has full rights and privileges to understand what it's like to be denied them. A friend (not local) reacting to some of my own recent writings about

gender e-mailed that same day, "You do realize how easy such a notion makes talking about a homosexual agenda believable to many?"

I replied, "But there *is* a homosexual agenda: to enjoy equal rights under the law, including marriage. (Not to be confused with the hysterical right wing "homosexual agenda" specter of gays turning their children into abominations)" I offer myself as a control "group" of one. I do not have a significant other, nor do I desire to be married, but the passage of the bill found me truly goose-bump elated. I now have the right, should events take that turn, to be married. Those already so privileged can have no concept what it is like for a young boy or girl to realize from childhood that they will *never* be allowed to legally marry the one they love. That is no longer true in Minnesota!

As thrilling as this victory is, it will not be complete until DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act) is overturned. Same-sex married couples in Minnesota will have the 515 state rights and protections already granted to their straight counterparts, but not yet the 1,100-plus federal rights. Remember, and keep working.



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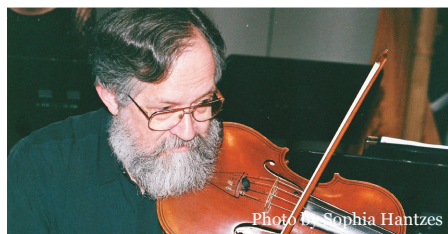


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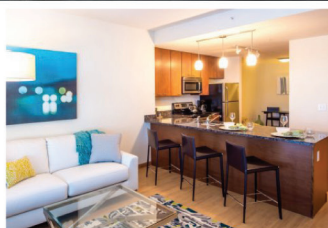
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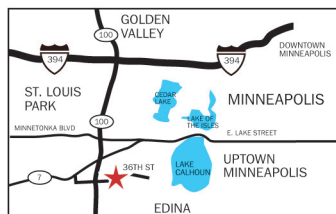
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by Barry Leavitt

QUEER MUSIC CONSORTIUM CONCERT

Monday, June 3 • 7-9PM

Como Lakeside Pavilion • 1360 Lexington Pkwy. N., St. Paul
This free outdoor concert has become a fun tradition to kick-start the Twin Cities Pride season, as well as a way to begin enjoying Minnesota's summer weather. Join your friends to hear One Voice Mixed Chorus, Calliope Women's Chorus, Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus, Minnesota Freedom Band, and of course the MPO perform. It's your last chance to hear the MPO until next season, so don't miss it! <http://www.mnphil.org/events/qmc-concert/>

BECAUSE 2013 CONVENTION

Friday, June 7 – Sunday, June 9

Augsburg College • 2211 Riverside Ave. S., Minneapolis
The Annual BECAUSE Conference continues to build the Bi, Pan, Fluid, Queer, Unlabeled and Allied community. The conference is accepting of all people across gender and sexuality spectrums, including but not limited to Trans, Genderqueer, Intersex, Poly, Asexual, Gay, Lesbian. We encourage and support people from diverse backgrounds and experiences to come join us for this eventful weekend. www.bisexualorganizingproject.org/BECAUSE-Conference.html

MR. MINNEAPOLIS EAGLE 2013 AND EMPEROR XVII PRESENTS

Friday, June 7 • 7-10PM

The Saloon • 830 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
Join the reigning Mr. Minneapolis Eagle Ryan Brown and Emperor XVII Darin Hatch for an evening showcasing Gearwear and a silent auction. The evening's festivities will be emceed by Camille Collins. Admission is \$5 and includes partaking in the beer bust. Proceeds benefit The Aliveness Project. <http://www.impcourtmn.com/events.htm>

BIPPY'S BURLESQUE-O-RAMA

Wednesday, June 12 • Doors at 7:30PM, Show starts at 8PM

Cabaret Theater in Camp Bar • 490 N. Robert St., St. Paul
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MINNESOTA VOICES

Friday, June 14 • 7:30pm • Saturday, June 15 • 3pm and 7:30pm

Sundin Hall, Hamline University, 1536 Hewitt Ave., St. Paul
One Voice Mixed Chorus, Minnesota's GLBTA chorus, presents **Minnesota Voices**, a concert celebrating all things Minnesota—from the State Fair, lumberjacks and folk-songs to music on a stick! The concert takes place under the direction of Jane Ramseyer Miller, and features songs by Minnesota composers from Bob Dylan, Libby Larsen, Abbie Betinis and Rene Clausen to Prince and Semisonic! www.ovmc.org □



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Friday-Saturday ★ June 28-29, 2013
8pm ★ Ted Mann Concert Hall

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Alice In Wonderland. Photo by Dan Norman

Alice In Wonderland

Through June 15

Children's Theatre, 2400 3rd Av. S., Mpls.

(612) 874-0400

www.childrenstheatre.org

A resplendent example of an alternate reality being conjured right before your eyes on stage. Peter Brosius's direction and G.W. Mercier's set and costume designs channel a visionary portal into Lewis Carroll's classic wonderland as adapted for stage by Sharon Holland. A floor resembling an infinite chess board and the Cheshire Cat's limbs that enlarge and intrude upon the action from various directions underline the text's surrealist sensibility. Amidst this madness, Anna Evans is pure perfection as Alice, the rational youthful voice that guilelessly challenges the tyrannical Queen of Hearts and the petty tyrant, Mad Hatter. Evans is exactly what Carroll had in mind.

GAY SHOWS AT NEW WORKS 4 WEEKS FESTIVAL

May 30 – June 9

Red Eye Theater, 15 West 14th St., Mpls

(612) 870-0309

www.redeyetheater.org

Red Eye's annual series, aka Isolated Acts, is always the place to be for cutting-edge performance work. Week one (May 30 – June 2) has a grouping of short works that includes a solo dance entitled *Discrete Convolutions* that contains queer content by Sam Johnson. Week Two (June 6-9) Nick LeMere gives us big dresses and pretty



Gay Shows at New Works 4 Weeks Festival. Photo by Adan Torres

men in non-stop choreography. *He & Him/She & Her* is said to be a flamboyant movement journey - a perfect fit with its wedding themes as we celebrate Marriage Equality in Minnesota. LeMere, a po-mo homo and fashion stylist, is supported by dancers Luke Melsha, Chris LaPlante, and again, Sam Johnson. Isolated Acts is perhaps the best showcase for new innovative performance work in the Twin Cities. Johnson and LeMere provide a lovely way to launch the Pride Month spirit!

HEROCYCLE

June 21-29

Old Arizona Theatre, 2821 Nicollet Av., Mpls.

(800) 838-3006

www.ftfworks.org

Evel Knievel was a motorcycle daredevil who enthralled the world in the 1960s and '70s. Erik Hoover and Kym Longhi draw from concepts made accessible by mythology expert Joseph Campbell. A series of motorcycle jumps springs into Campbell's 'monomythic' ideas about how a hero will spring into the collective (un)consciousness at the point he or she is collectively needed. Indeed, the late '60s and '70s are noted by many for corruption and nihilism.

Hoover, one of the region's top physical actors, shares: "The term 'monomyth' basically refers to the structure that human myths follow: Departure. Initiation. Return. The hero is called to adventure and is tested before they—if they survive—return to their tribe with a Boon. It's the basic story that humanity endlessly tells itself. We

use this life/death/rebirth cycle as a framework for the arc of the show, but each jump Evel makes is a cycle within the greater one: the hero leaves the earth, either lands successfully or crashes, and is changed by the experience. *Herocycle* takes place in Evel's mind while in a coma state, a liminal space between life and death, where the cycle endlessly repeats forever."

Longhi adds, "It's about being alive, sometimes even painfully, and having the guts to make mistakes in pursuit of that thing we call 'our bliss.'"

MINNESOTA OPERA'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY – OPERA UNDER THE STARS – LA BOHEME

Fri., June 14 at 7 pm, Harriet

Island Target Stage, St. Paul

Sat., June 15 at 7:30 pm, Lake

Harriet Bandshell, Mpls.

Sun., June 16 at 7 pm, Shattuck-

St. Mary's, Faribault

Free Admission

www.mnopera.org

Puccini's timeless opera was the inspiration for the musical *Rent* and celebrates the bohemian energy that catapults art and consciousness into new dimensions. It's a great choice to celebrate Minnesota Opera's half a century of terrific work, both classical and innovative. Artistic Director Dale Johnson reflects on the past season: "The three performances of Puccini's *La Boheme* in the Twin Cities area and Faribault cap off a brilliant year of opera. The opening performance of *Nabucco*, with its homage to production style of the mid-19th



Telsa. Photo by Mathieu Lindquist

century sets the tone for the exploration of opera, old and new. *Anna Bolena* winds up the trilogy of the Tudor Queens by Donizetti, and *Doubt* electrified audiences with its intriguing exploration of certainty. *Hamlet* was a bravura production featuring an equally bravura performance by Brian Mulligan and *Turdandot* captured the epic quality of Puccini's last opera with color and brilliance. Just as Minnesota Opera celebrates 50 years of great performances, we also salute the Minnesota Legislature for its brave step in instituting true equality here in Minnesota."

MUSIC LINEUP AT EAST CENTRAL MN PRIDE IN THE PARK

Sunday, June 2
Voyageurs Park, Pine City, MN
www.facebook.com/ECMCPRide

East Central Minnesota Pride wants everyone to come on out and up to Pine City for an extraordinary line-up of music talent. Co-organizer Nathan Johnson says, "We plan to honor and recognize those present who intend to marry. We will celebrate the new law following the performance of *Nobody's Weddin'* because this is now 'Everybody's Weddin'.' Every couple will receive recognition and a flower. We thought this would be a great addition."

You can also catch headliner singer extraordinaire Chastity Brown who hails from Tennessee and has built a huge following in Minnesota. She is compared to such greats as Leadbelly, Nina Simone, Bonnie Raitt, and Roberta Flack. Johnson's fellow organizer is Louisa Hext, who you recall has been a great organizer in the Twin Cities for queer and arts events, so you know the Pine City event will be something extra special. Let's drive on up!

PICTURING POVERTY: ARTISTIC VIEWS OF THE POOR IN THE BAROQUE ERA

Through June 2
Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2400 Third Av. S., Mpls.
(612) 870-3000
www.artsmia.org

Now that Marriage Equality has been won in Minnesota, it's time for healing. A perfect common ground is MIA gallery 344. Conservative Christians who have come to only see gay and sexual issues as the overriding concerns and GLBT activists and allies who have been single issue-oriented for the past few years should all agree with Christ's call to care about the poor and needy. And no, I'm not saying you must be a Christian but it's important for any civilized citizen to

remember that call. *Picturing Poverty* uses The 30 Years War (1618-48) as a springboard into Christian Europe's own call to deal with the subsequent poverty thereof. Striking etchings stress the humble, impoverished aspect of Jesus's own life with his own birth in a stable, circumcision in the stable, the adoration of the shepherds, and the flight into Egypt—refugees, of course, being automatically poor. From this charitably Christian base, other, mostly 17th century works, focus on commoners rather than the monarchic and aristocratic representations that tend to dominate much of classic European painting: Cornelis Bega's *The Amorous Couple*, Jacques Callot's haunting series of war, poverty, and social destitution disturbs with images: a firing squad (did someone steal a loaf of bread?), a crudely equipped hospital, beggars, and last rites. William Hogarth's mid-18th century *Gin Lane* seems to indict the social system that perpetuates poverty while at the same time cautioning of the wages of debauchery: A barebreasted drunken woman has just dropped her baby, a man tussles with a dog over a bone, a barebreasted woman lies in a coffin, a tortured child is shown. Baptiste Stouf's moving sculpture of Apostle of Charity St. Vincent De Paul with dead babies at his feet returns us to Christianity's legacy of anguished compassion. A corrective exhibit that both sides of the marriage debate can now lay down their arms for...and perhaps

be allies. Poverty and homelessness are detriments to social harmony as these Baroque artists well knew.

TESLA

Through June 9
Nimbus Theatre, 1517 Central Av. N., Mpls.
(612) 548-1380
www.nimbustheatre.com

Writer/director Josh Cragun's engaging stage docudrama outlines the conflict between scientific innovator Nikola Tesla and capitalist financier demagogues like J. P. Morgan. Tesla's insights about robotics, wireless technology, and outer space were socially unacceptable, though in recent decades it's clear that he was onto something phenomenal. Cragun clearly views him as man against the power structure and Zach Morgan's title role performance reflects that poignantly. Heidi Berg's delightfully gruff crossgender turns as J. P. Morgan reminds us just how powerful a single man's arrogance can misguide a whole economy. History buffs will find much to admire and dispute in *Tesla*.

VISITING MR. GREEN

June 13 – 23
Sabes Jewish Community Center, 4330 S. Cedar Lake Rd., Mpls.
(651) 321-8840
www.TheaterNOW.org

Theater NOW revives Jeff Baron's acclaimed mid-'90s award-winner with Robert Marcus as Green and Tom Glaser as Ross. American GLBT citizens and allies have become so accustomed to thinking of homophobia as a conservative Christian problem, when, as Baron reminds us, it's a Jewish community problem too. Marcus reflects: "Mr. Green is a lost, lonely, and deeply orthodox Jewish man, 86, recently widowed. He is rooted in the traditions and laws of his faith. Mr. Green comes face to face with the modern day realities and sensibilities that threaten his lifestyle, his faith and his family. The traditions, rules, and laws of his faith, once the backbone of his family and his life, are now exposed to the modern social lifestyles which he cannot and will not accept. And through his new found caretaker, Ross Gardiner, the hip and professional modern man, Mr. Green must face his own moral judgements by witnessing and experiencing the deepest loss from his own life and the long struggle he must face to forgiveness."

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Minneapolis Musical Theatre

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ARTS & CULTURE



MUSIC | Ed Huyck



HAR MAR SUPERSTAR *Bye Bye 17*

The last time we heard from Minnesota's Sean Tillman in this guise, he was pushing modern electronic dance music – with a distinct twist – on 2009's *Dark Touches*. What a difference four years can make. Bye Bye 17 finds the Superstar stuck in the cool side of the 1960s and 1970s, launching a set of 10 soul-infused numbers that trade in some (but not all) of the sly humor for a chance to bear his heart. The shock of "Lady, You Shot Me," where the singer is backed up by horns and a funky band, quickly gives in to a string of tunes that wouldn't be out of place on a sweaty dance floor four decades ago. I'm ready to head back with this album.



YEAH YEAH YEAHS *Mosquito*

Lots of modern-take, superficial elements from post-punk – a scratchy guitar here, a wailing keyboard there – but the Yeah Yeah Yeahs live it. *Mosquito* bristles with sharp guitars, off-kilter rhythms and the signature wail of Karen O. The album arrests the listener from the breathless opening lyrics of "Sacrilege" to the brilliantly building tension of "Wedding Song." It's music that plays at being catchy and abrasive at the same time, never giving the listener an easy second along the way. While Karen O's voice is instantly recognizable, don't sleep on the contributions of guitarist Nick Zinner and drummer Brian Chase. The distinct interplay among the three core musicians has long made the Yeah Yeah Yeahs one of modern American rock's best bands, and *Mosquito* is no different.



!!! *Thr!!!er*

Apart from being nearly impossible to search for on the internet (try "chk chk chk" if you want to), the U.S. group has mainly been about explosive dance music over the past 17 years. With the equally awkwardly titled *Thr!!!er*, the band codifies their style into a set of propulsive, brainy dance-floor packers. If Har Mar Superstar takes us back to the early days of the 1970s, this is an album that lives at the opposite end of the decade, in the "dying" days of the original push of disco – and as the music transformed into something darker and underground. It's especially heartening to hear an album like this in an era when so much music sounds like the producer just pushed a button.



JAMES BLAKE *Overgrown*

After an evening spent on the dance floor with the above three bands, it may be good to have a bit of a chill out. Over the past few years, the Brit has explored his own aural space, wandering down paths the likes of Brian Eno, Kraftwerk and a whole host of 1990s artists have done before. Just like some of the neo-folkies – such as past collaborator Bon Iver – Blake finds considerable fresh sounds in the quiet spaces that are usually ignored in our modern bombastic world. Even a visit from the RZA, on the throbbing "Take a Fall for Me" keeps the vibe low key, crafting a few minutes of music as terrifying as any classic Massive Attack song. □

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Taking a Bite Out of the Big Apple

by Joy Summers

There is just nothing that compares to New York City: the busy sidewalks that feel like they could lead you to any one of a million new discoveries, the soaring buildings that scrape the sky, the green expanse of Central Park where you can get lost while still surrounded by millions of people.

This is the greatest city on earth – it's okay to believe the hype. For once, the PR might match the promise.

It's also the food hub of the country. With all of the restaurants, markets, food stalls, street food, food trucks, Zabars, Dean & DeLuca and Eataply – there are never enough meals in the day to properly taste more than a fraction of the great eats in the city.

Which is why, when you go, you're going to need to strategize. I like to get in one fine-dining destination reservation, a scheduled brunch and plenty of time to discover whatever the city sees fit to bring you – because the delight is in the discovery.

First, pull out the big guns. Getting a reservation at some of the hot tickets in NYC can require a full-time lobbyist position. Call in everybody you know who might know anybody. I remember sitting captive in a car as a friend desperately called a Mario Batali restaurant over and over and over again at the specific time the reservation line was open. It took 45 minutes, but he did snag a dinner reservation at 5:00 exactly three months to the date. Personally, I don't possess that kind of te-

THIS IS THE GREATEST CITY ON EARTH. FOR ONCE, THE PR MIGHT MATCH THE PROMISE.

Continued on page 24 ➔

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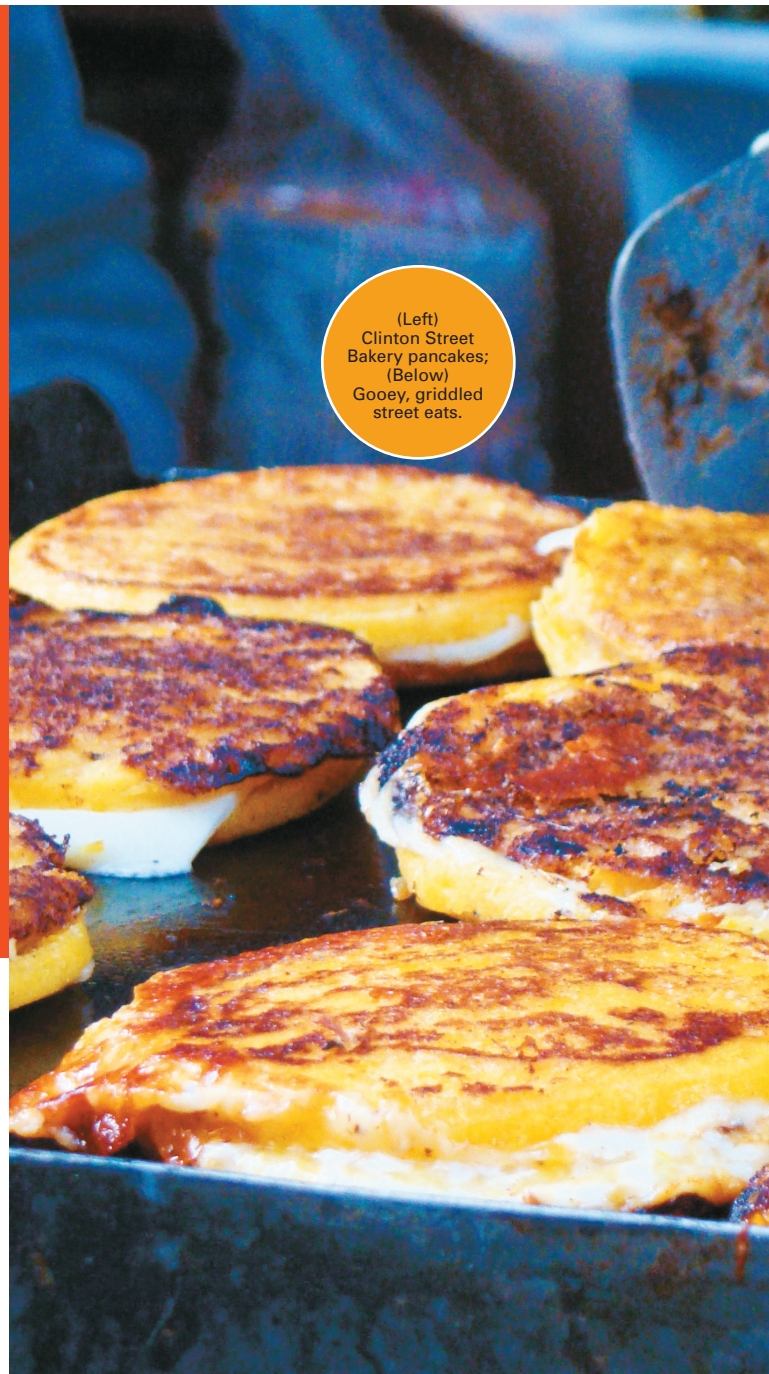
nacity, plus, I hate making phone calls. If I can't text or email, I'm not calling. Instead, I plot to eat at off times. Momofuku restaurants from James Beard Award winning chef and celebrity David Chang can have lines around the block at meal times. You can call for a reservation and for a considerable price, and a required number of guests, you can have the full Bo Ssam dinner. For much less time and money commitment, I waltzed into Momofuku Ssam at 2 o'clock on a Friday afternoon and was treated to exquisite noodles before walking across the street to the equally lauded Milk Bar for some green apple and cheddar cheese soft serve. (It was a good thing the hotel was 17 blocks away and I could waddle some of those calories away).

There are also all kinds of gorgeous farmers markets to discover. There are now 54 markets in every part of the city, offering all sorts of green goods, some from traditional farms, others from urban lots grown nearby. It's a great opportunity to get in with the locals and discover new seasonal flavors.

It's not just the market and stalls that will catch your hungry eye—keep on the lookout for one of my favorite ways to eat, food trucks! Find a few on Twitter or just happen upon a couple. Exotic spice scents beckon from a block away. Dine al fresco on some of the best ice cream known to man at the Big Gay Ice Cream truck. It's not just a clever name – an adorable soft serve flourish is adorned with spicy nuts you will want all up in your face.

Sometimes, you just happen upon an impromptu dining opportunity. One Saturday I walked into a Soho street fair. Surrounded by fantastic shopping and suddenly there were arepas the size of my head – a perfect accessory to a new Uniqlo shirt. Enormous, fluffy corn cakes griddle crispy, and stuffed with gooey cheese. There were also elotes, tamales, and a giant tray of crispy pork belly next to stalls of handmade leather goods, blown glass jewelry and funky paintings, all affordably priced.

Breakfast is another meal that's best not to enter into too hungry. Waits at the world famous Clinton Street Bakery keep hipsters milling about for over an hour, but those pancakes worth it. Grab an apple before leaving the hotel and gird your gut for great breakfast. Or, if you're daunted by the wait, there are plenty of



(Left)
Clinton Street
Bakery pancakes;
(Below)
Goosey, griddled
street eats.



(Left)
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Continued on page 26 ➔



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Because no party is complete without a goody bag, make some room for treats to bring home. Lose yourself inside Eataly, the massive Italian market. There is nothing a food lover won't find inside these walls. First, start with a cup of coffee – arguably the best of the city (where Starbucks seem to be giving Duane Reed a run for their one-on-every-block money.) Cured meats, raw meat, fresh fish, fresh bread, tins of Italian candies, boxes of cookies, fresh pastry, fresh pasta, dried pasta, cookbooks, cookware, spoons, dishes, works of art, truffles – it's enough to make a whirling food-driven dervish of you. Walk softly and bring big bags.

There's no better way to finish off the weekend than with a stiff drink. There are plenty of craft cocktail makers, but the one spot that currently holds the nation's attention is Pouring Ribbons. There's no sign on the street, so you'll want to know where you're going. The doorman is your tip that you've found the right block. Wait your turn to be led upstairs to a stool and a massive menu. Drinks are organized from easy to challenging on the palate. The more adventurous will be rewarded will chartreuse mixed with cumin into a startlingly herby, sweet, toasted spice concoction. Although, no drink is pedestrian, this is not a bad spot to order the original, proper Manhattan. Watching these bartenders move is its own kind of theater. They whip through the drink orders, creating complex concoctions with astounding speed.

No matter how long the stay – months aren't enough to discover all the great delights this city has available for feeding you. ▣



(Clockwise from top) Tamales; Crispy pork belly; Clinton Street Bakery egg sandwich; Big Gay Ice Cream Hot Nuts.



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Summer Getaways to Rhode Island, the Ocean State

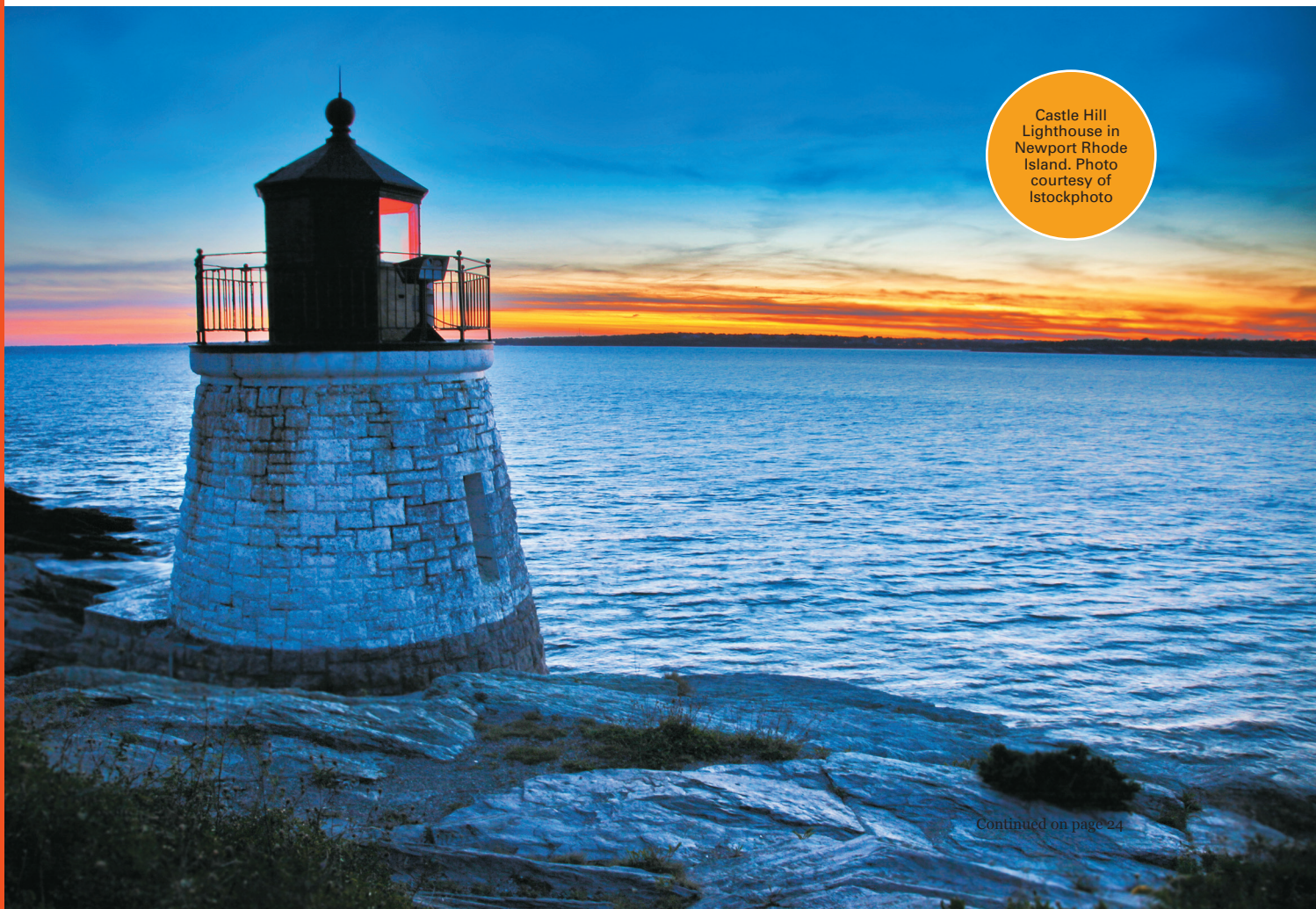
by  **Yani Altagracia Peña**

Recently becoming the tenth state to perform same-sex marriages in the country, Rhode Island's long-standing tradition of inclusion, liberty, and tolerance have cemented its reputation as one of the most gay-friendly states in the country. Rhode Island's vibrant nightlife, hip arts-and-cultural scene combined with world-class, critically acclaimed gastronomy are what make the Ocean State a great summer getaway. 'Little Rhody' has something to offer every traveler, from the rich history, luxury and opulence of Newport to Providence, the state's pulsating college town buzzing with a youthful energy and diversity that envelops all its visitors. Rhode Island's GLBT community and culture permeates every sector of the state, rather than being relegated to a specific 'gay neighborhood'—a further testament to the welcoming, casually cool attitude that Rhode Island exemplifies. And the word has started to get out...Travel + Leisure ranked Providence # 6 and The Advocate # 12, in their respective rankings of best LGBT cities in the U.S.

THE CASUAL LUXURY OF NEWPORT

Perhaps better known as the setting of the Gilded Age, Newport, Rhode Island has long been a symbol of American luxury and elegance. America's elite built homes in Newport to escape the hustle and bustle of urban life, entertain other well-to-do guests, and spend their down time enjoying the beautiful waterfront vistas of the Ocean State. Estates such as The Breakers and Marble House were more than just summer homes— they were symbols of the social and financial preeminence of the most elite American families. Today, Newport's mansions are protected national treasures which reflect the apex of American prosperity during the industrial revolution and which still retain the same aristocratic, over-the-top feel.

Visitors are virtually guaranteed a breathtaking backdrop and relaxing retreat at one of Little Rhody's legendary golf courses or vineyards. The Orchard Course in Newport National Golf Club opened in June 2002 to rave national and regional reviews. Designed by legendary golf architect Arthur Hills, the course is



Castle Hill Lighthouse in Newport Rhode Island. Photo courtesy of Istockphoto

Continued on page 24

(From Left)
Small state, big
beautiful water views.
Photos courtesy of
Rhode Island
Tourism
Division



located on almost 200 acres of former shrub and tree nurseries and offers sweeping views of The Sakonnet Passage, Atlantic Ocean and Narragansett Bay. The equally magnificent Green-vale Vineyards, originally a 19th century Victorian farm, is listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places. One of many exceptional wineries that compose the Southeastern New England Wine Growing Appellation, this vineyard produces a dazzling array of white and red wines, holds tastings, and hosts a live jazz series every Saturday from May through November.

Visitors would be amiss if they didn't also visit the Museum of the International Tennis Hall of Fame located in Newport, which honors players and contributors to the sport of tennis. Set dramatically in the original rooms of the historic Newport Casino, the Museum chronicles the history of the sport and Newport's role as the cradle of American tennis. The Museum contains a diverse collection of memorabilia, art, fashion and more from the 12th century through present day. Items on display include trophies and attire belonging to the game's biggest stars, vintage tennis equipment, video highlights of great matches and tennis clothing ranging from Victorian dresses to modern fashions.

ADVENTURE SPORTS & SEASIDE FUN IN THE 'OCEAN STATE'

Rhode Island's nickname is no misnomer— with more than 400 miles of coastline and hundreds of beaches packed into its tiny

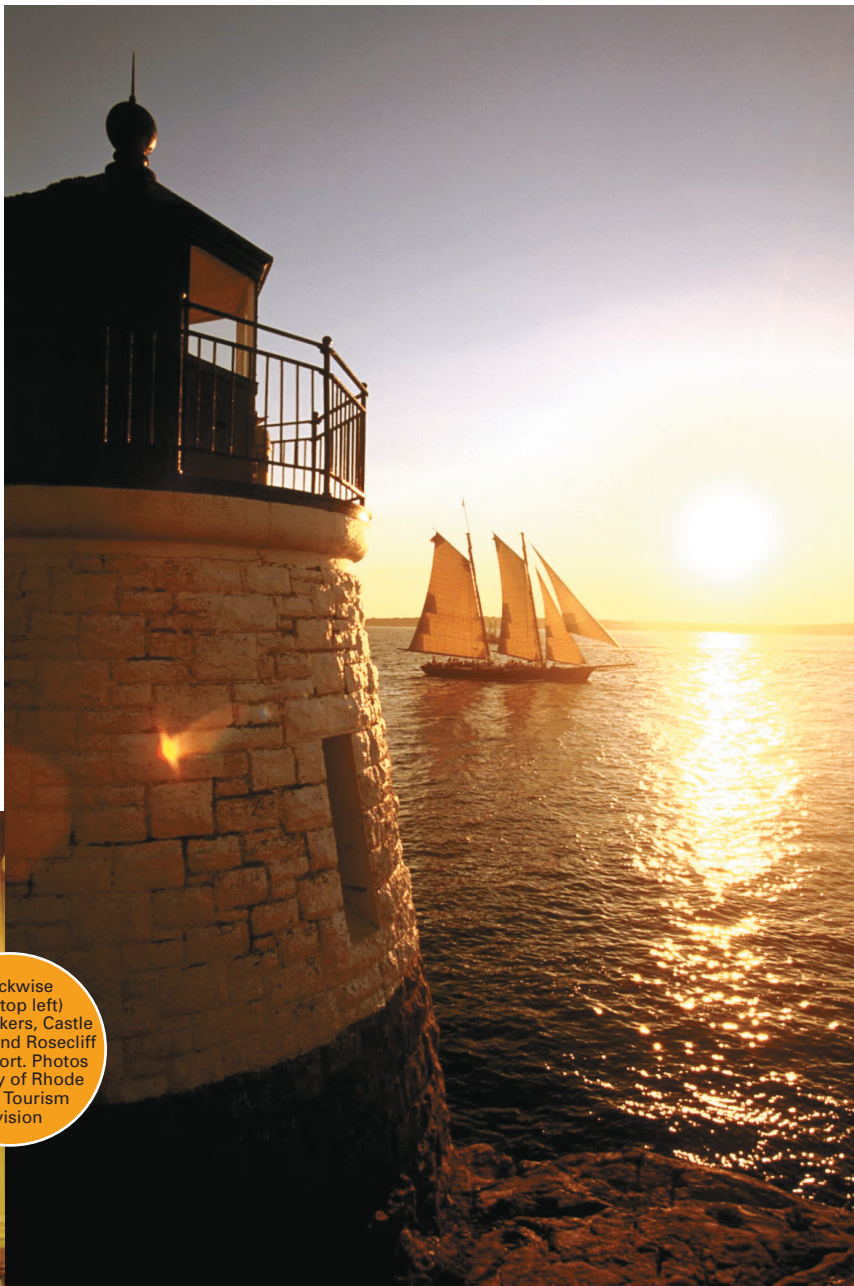
frame, The Ocean State is a natural haven for nautical sport aficionados from around the world. Newport is inarguably the world's sailing capital and hosts both the Atlantic Cup and America's Cup. Narragansett Bay, the geographic center of Rhode Island and Newport's breathtaking backdrop, was recently recognized by National Geographic as one of the top adventure sports destinations in the world for its kayaking. Depending on your level of expertise and appetite for adventure, you may choose to take in the breathtaking vistas of the Bay during the summer months by either swimming, sailing, kayaking, whale-watching or fishing.

Polo and horse lovers will not want to miss the International Polo Series that takes place each summer in Newport, where the first polo clubs in the United States originated over 125 years ago as a pastime of the industrial barons of the "Gilded Age". Triathletes and adventure sport enthusiasts of all types can enjoy running, biking, and hiking in the state's varied terrain while taking in Rhode Island's remarkably picturesque scenery. From the flat lands of the south to the steep, rugged woodlands up north, Little Rhody is sure to challenge and excite athletes of all levels of expertise.

With such a rich natural landscape, sustainability and ecological preservation are top priorities for Rhode Island. More than 350 species of migrating birds make their way through the state's preserved habitats, adding to the spectacular eco-



(Clockwise from top left)
The Breakers, Castle Hill Inn, and Rosecliff in Newport. Photos courtesy of Rhode Island Tourism Division



system. Nature enthusiasts will enjoy whale watching, hiking miles of marked nature trails or visiting any of Rhode Island's excellent environmental centers, where trained professionals are available to guide visitors through the state's varied terrain.

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND'S CROWN JEWEL

Founded in 1636, Providence was built on the ideals of liberty, tolerance and free will – a feeling that still permeates the city today and is coupled with amazing eats, a buzzing nightlife, and arts and cultural offerings that compete with (and often surpass) many of the great American cities.

One of the culinary capitals of the U.S., Providence was ranked # 1 in 2012 by Travel + Leisure for being the Best City in the U.S. for Foodies. Its culinary scene is innovative, sophisticated and vibrant, thanks to the many students from Providence's Johnson & Wales University, the world's largest culinary educator, who decided to stay in Rhode Island upon their graduation.

Providence's history and geography have also helped to cement its reputation as a culinary capital. Waves of immigrants have come to the city in the last two centuries, bringing their recipes and culinary traditions with them. As a result, Providence has a wide variety of ethnic restaurants from which to choose, but the city is perhaps most famous for its Italian food.

"The Federal Hill section of Providence is home to over 40 Italian restaurants within one square mile and considered one of the five best Little Italys in the United States," says Mark Brodeur, Director of Tourism for the Rhode Island Economic Development Committee. "To really savor Federal Hill, be sure to make time for a culinary walking tour of the city. You'll get to taste everything and speak to the pasta makers, chefs, and bakers. It's an experience you'll never forget!"

Providence's preeminence as an artistic haven isn't relegated solely to the culinary — theatrical arts and fine arts are also ever-present at the area theaters and at the world-renowned Rhode Island School of Design Art Museum, where the works of the great masters of visual art and of RISD alumni are exhibited. But perhaps the most uniquely breathtaking work of art in the city is WaterFire, an award-winning installation of over eighty sparkling bonfires that sit in braziers atop the three rivers of downtown Providence. The installation is full of motion: throughout the night, fire-tenders stoke the fires, boats glide past the flames, rivers flow quietly beneath the braziers, sparks whirl through the night air, and flickering flames reflect off the dark surface of the water, animating the architectural fabric of the city. The fragrant wood smoke intertwines with enchanting music and firelight, capturing the imagination of every per-

son walking the paths of Waterplace Park or lingering on the benches or bridges by the water. Since its inception in 1997, the "crown jewel of the Providence renaissance" has drawn over ten million visitors to downtown Providence, revitalizing the city with its simple, inspiring beauty.

BLOCK ISLAND: AN ISLAND PARADISE MINUTES AWAY

Block Island, a ten-square mile seaside resort located just twelve miles off the Rhode Island coast, is an evocative page from an Americana past. Heralded as "one of the twelve best unspoiled areas in the Western Hemisphere," the island's rolling green hills and dramatic Mohegan Bluffs are reminiscent of Ireland, and its beautifully restored Victorian hotels preserve the elegance of a bygone era. It takes no time at all to get to Block Island – just over an hour by ferry, a half-hour by a high speed ferry and mere minutes if you hop on a tiny plane from Westerly or Newport.

A vacation anomaly, Block Island manages to be exclusive, sophisticated and unpretentious all at the same time. Large, white clapboard Victorian hotels and inns stand on hillsides overlooking Old Harbor. Ducks waddle along the dirt pathways, squawking at strangers, while cattle and goats graze in tiny pastures. Well-traveled visitors have remarked that the scenery evokes images of France's Normandy coast.

On Block Island you can spend the entire day playing or relaxing at one of the many beautiful, extensive sandy beaches. Rent a rowboat, sailboat, surfboard or charter boat for sight-seeing and deep-sea fishing. Block Island is especially noted for its swordfish, record-sized striped bass, bluefish and flounder. The best way to tour the island is by bicycle, moped or just walking around and exploring. Experience the breathtaking Mohegan Bluffs, the Clayhead Nature Trail, Settler's Rock and historic North and Southeast lighthouses.

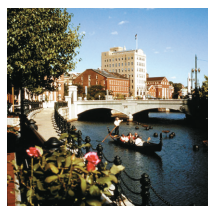
FUN TO BE FOUND ALL YEAR ROUND

Regardless of your preferred travel season, you'll find Rhode Island has something special and magical to offer. Autumn is when Rhode Island's picturesque landscape turns into a kaleidoscope of color. The fall foliage serves as backdrop to the season's pumpkins, corn mazes, and Halloween-themed events happening throughout the state. The crisp New England winter weather allows for outdoor skating, snow tubing, and holiday cheer. During Spring, the flower buds bloom, the maple syrup flows and festivals fill every weekend. Summer is naturally the season for sunbathing, adventure sports, and outdoor activities, and opportunities for all three are offered in abundance within 'Little Rhody'.

For more information on planning your summer getaway, please go to www.visitrhodeisland.com.



(From top)
Urban history
and water welcome
visitors. Photos
courtesy of Rhode
Island Tourism
Division



SIDEBAR

Gay- and Lesbian-Owned Inns and B&Bs (Newport)

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The Francis Malbone House Inn
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Gay- or Lesbian-Owned Restaurants

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www.sardellas.com

Marina Pub & Café, Newport
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Panoramic view of Vienna. Photo courtesy of iStockphoto

Vienna, Austria

by Carla Waldemar

As my taxi brakes at Vienna's Hotel Sacher, 600 tweens shriek a welcome. I return a queenly wave, then look behind me. Oh. It's Justin Bieber.

It's true: Vienna is loosening her stays, trading her former uber-propriety for a bit of a fling. (OK, I'm still the only felon who crosses a deserted street on a red light.) The Imperial palace of super-human proportions and its sister High-Baroque buildings within the Ring Road circling the inner city still salute the Good Old Days, but in neighborhoods beyond, young urban bohós are claiming turf.

With Alexa as my insider-guide, I cross the Danube Canal to the Second District—once home to a scrambling working class, mostly Jewish (Indeed, Orthodox believers still stroll past us, clad in black.) But today, marshaling the canal, rises a new Sofitel Hotel, the work of star architect Jean Nouvel. Within that building flourishes Stilwerk: three floors of forward, must-have home décor studios. Deeper into the Second, we pop in at Song, showcasing designer women's wear and pre-war French furniture. At neighboring Café Ansari of industrial chic, Turkish food accompanies your cappuccino. Skopik & Lohn—a trendy club—showcases a ceiling splattered à la Jackson Pollack, while nearby, and still not gentrified, the Carmelite open-air market seldom sees tourists fingering the tomatoes. We pass Muth—new home of the venerable Vienna Boys' Choir—and Augarten, a formal garden park, now anchored

by the Porcelain Museum, showcasing classic to contemporary designs. The Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum of Contemporary Art also has chosen the Augarten for its new home.

Next morning, I'm venturing beyond the opposite Ring Road boundary to Naschmarkt, pushing through throngs of shoppers ogling everything from picnic-ready cheese, sausage and produce, to classy Champagne-and-oyster combos. Furrowing deeper, I reach the lusty flea-market section, where I resist the opportunity to purchase a wind-up Victrola, be-ribboned war medals, vintage furs and tarnished silver. (Well, I *love* that miniature clock, even sans its innards!)

But the golden dome of the Secession Museum is beckoning. Inside, it celebrates rebels of an earlier era with Gustav Klimt's jaw-dropping Beethoven mural, lush with juicy Art Nouveau nudes. Other rooms continue its radical, anti-establishment mission. So does the Leopold, my favorite of the Museum Quarters' venues. Here, more radicals, as in Egon Schiele's grimly risqué work: crumbling city-scapes, decaying fields, Madonnas-as-death's heads, and the passionately embracing "Cardinal and Nun." Klimt again is memorialized by his gold-kissed Art Nouveau women. (Both friends died in 1918.)

Hungry for more art, I climb the endless stairs of the Academy of Fine Arts to revisit Teutonic superstars of former eras—Rembrandt,

Rubens, Durer, Bosch. Still outside the Ring, but just barely, I'm wandering the Museum of Applied Art (MAK), much more enticing than that boring name, with flamboyant displays of furniture design, past—gorgeous past—to futuristic.

With art goes architecture—the Palace, the Riding School, the Parliament—and Vienna's gorgeous cache of churches, starting with its monumental mascot, St. Stephen's Cathedral, with its sky-piercing steeples and signature zig-zag tiled roof. Intimate St. Peter's is an homage to High Baroque, vibrant with energy. St. Michael's high altar offers a scene of writhing, sculpted bodies called "Angels' Overthrow"; peer beyond and you'll spy faded frescoes from far earlier, like that grinning Red Devil. (Outside, peek into the excavation of Roman ruins.) The Augustine Church, maybe my favorite, is a delicate sonata of fluted columns and beaded chandeliers. Here, Sunday Mass is always a musical marvel—on Easter, Mozart's magnificent "Missa Solemnis."

Then it's on to Mozart's House itself, where he composed "Marriage of Figaro," but short on artifacts. Better to head directly to the fascinating House of Music, which starts the journey with explanations of how our bodies hear sounds. Then, interactively, listen to various noises, from coughing and snoring to washing windows, lightning strikes, the re-entry of Apollo. Even create your own CD.

Next, and best, is the lively story of the lively lives of the city's musical sons: Haydn (including the parrot, now stuffed, who called him "Papa Haydn"); then Mozart, whose letters decry Salzburg with its "coarse, vulgar, slovenly court music" and tout Vienna as "entertainment enough." Play Amadeus by typing in your name, which "Mozart" will compose as a melody. Then there's Beethoven, Schubert, Johann Strauss Jr. and Mahler, noting strikes against him: "to be a German in Vienna and to be a Jew anywhere in the world." Finally, pick up a baton and "conduct" the Vienna Philharmonic onscreen.

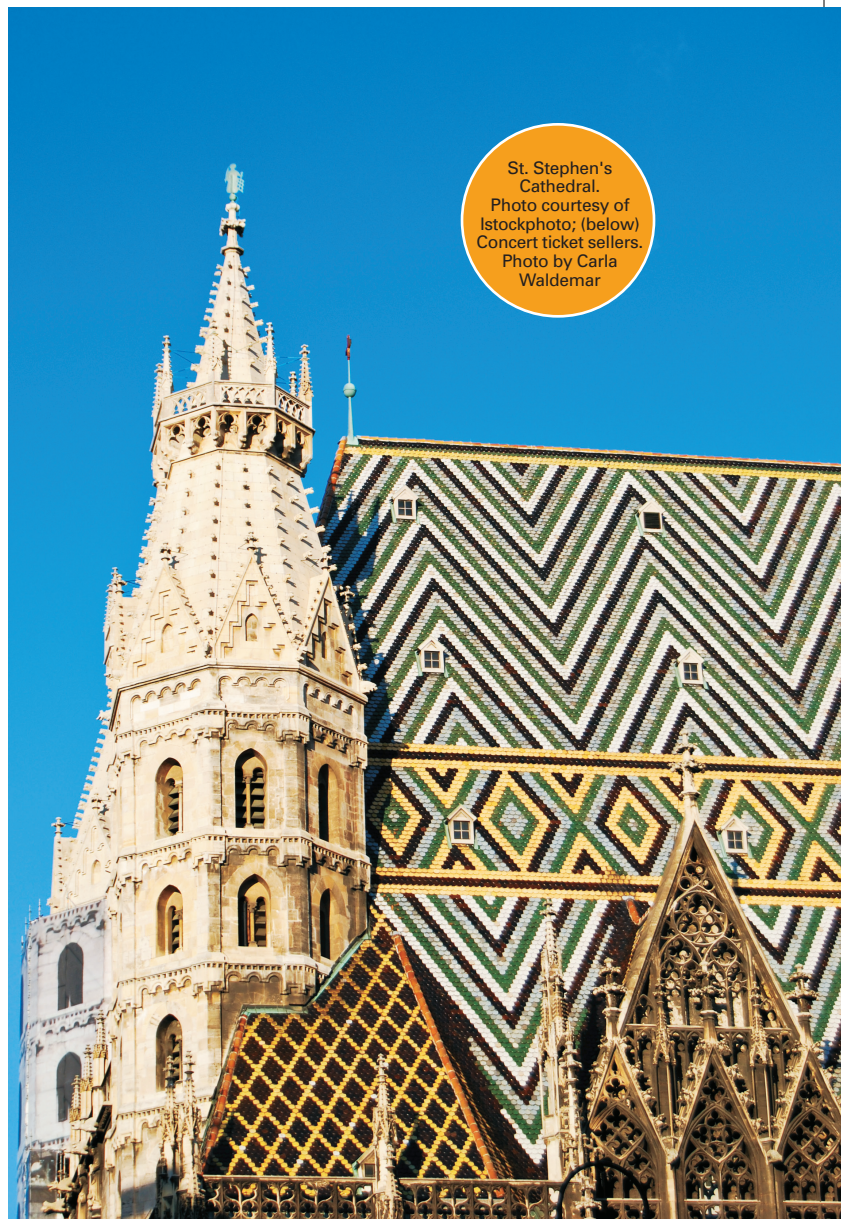
Vienna's food scene is just as delicious as its arts, and just as varied in style and era. I cannot resist revisiting old favorites, like Griensteidl, a coffeehouse since 1850 where a caffeinated Schoenberg mulled over his 12-tone scale. Newspapers on sticks, red velvet draping the high windows, it's a genteel place to linger (and the deep-fried fish with potato salad proved super.) Café Mozart, of 1744, is where the composer stopped for *eine kleiner braun*, but the decor has been updated to the early 1900s, with pink walls and plush upholstery. Grand people-watching, too. Gay-centric Café Savoy, near the Naschtmarkt, is a symphony of plush and sculpted stucco.

Ofenlach, near the Jewish Memorial, started life as a medieval Jewish cook house. A restaurant since 1704, it's home to traditional favorites, like my salad of fried chicken livers and walnuts, followed by zander fish on homemade noodles, then a chocolate-poppyseed mousse. Schubert hung out here before me, so I'm in good company.

On more modern notes, I love—love!—Vestibul, housed in the ornate foyer of the Volkstheater, where foodie- fave chef Christian strolls amid the tables, complimenting me on choosing his signature lobster in creamy cabbage. Start with the irresistible square of beef tartare, husky truffle slice, and foie gras mousse. Then try Christian's light version of wiener schnitzel, or other updated classics. Just as forward, the stylish restaurant inside the MAK, where another star-chef infuses classic fare with modern twists, such as pasta tossed with stewed cabbage, or goulash with bread dumplings and chillies. Gotta have the walnut tart with plum sauce.

Then on to two newly-opened hits: Motto am Fluss, owned by the "most known gay man in Vienna," according to guide Alexa. Inside this "cruise ship" aside the Danube Canal, order updates like lamb tortellini in morel jus; arctic char with asparagus and wild garlic pain perdu; then, passionfruit dumplings with mango ice cream. Near the iconic Opera House stands the new Plachutta Gasthaus zur Oper, a skein of lively, modern rooms showcasing its specialty, wiener schnitzel, whose helium-light batter encloses tender, tender veal. Follow with kaiserschmern—puffy, powdered sugar-dusted pancakes served with home-stewed plums. Then, auf wiedersehen: "till next time!" Plan your visit at www.vienna.info. □

St. Stephen's Cathedral.
Photo courtesy of
Istockphoto; (below)
Concert ticket sellers.
Photo by Carla
Waldemar



SIDEBAR GAY VIENNA

Civil marriage has been legal since 2010. Tie the knot at over 40 locations, from the giant Ferris wheel to the Schonbrunn Palace. Annual highlight is July's Life Ball, Europe's most flamboyant AIDS/HIV charity event. The Rainbow Parade occurs two weeks earlier along the Ring Road, along with Pride Village. Gay cafes and bars are too numerous to mention, so check out www.gaynet.at for listings.

LIVE! For Pride Weekend...



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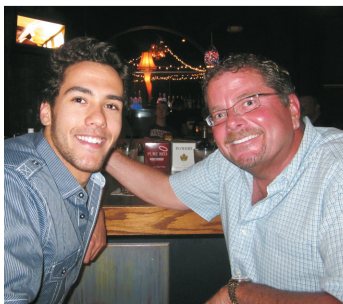


BAR SHOWCASE | photos by George Holdgrafer

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Minnesota Leather Pride 2013 features appearance by Hardy Haberman



Internationally known author, filmmaker, leatherman and gay activist Hardy Haberman will be making a speaking appearance in the Twin Cities as part of this year's Minnesota Leather Pride celebration. Haberman's appearance is just one of many events taking place June 14-30, 2013.

Minnesota's Leather Pride celebration has been bringing Minnesota's leather/BDSM/fetish community together since the mid-1990s. The celebration started as a single afternoon, post-Pride Parade get-together at the Gay 90s in Minneapolis. Within a few years, however, it had grown to its present form: a multi-event celebration spread over several weeks in June, culminating in the annual Ashley Rukes GLBT Pride Parade up Hennepin Avenue and the Twin Cities Pride Festival in Loring Park.

This year's Minnesota Leather Pride celebration mixes perennial favorite events like Floggapalooza with new events including rope and electrical play demonstrations and a Leather Pride bicycle ride to complement the traditional Leather Pride motorcycle ride. Also new this year is a Recovery in the Lifestyle twelve-step meeting and an "Adventures in Fetish" leather/fetish fashion show (followed by "FUNdRaver! 2," a rave dance party).

One of the goals of this year's Minnesota Leather Pride (MNLPR) planning committee is to encourage more involvement by local leather/BDSM/fetish community members in planning the theme and events for this year's celebration. MNLPR representatives attended many community events, parties, and meetings last December and January to gather community input. Community members were given a chance to vote for one of three proposed themes, either with a paper ballot or online, and were asked to suggest ideas for new MNLPR events.

Besides new events, the board also has added new venues for Minnesota Leather Pride events. New venues The Southern Theater, In The Heart of the Beast Theater and Clare House join returning venues Camp Bar, Patrick's Cabaret, Smitten Kitten, The Minneapolis Eagle/Bolt/Bolt Underground complex, and Loring Park.

The Minnesota Leather Pride dog tag

for 2013, the latest in a long and distinguished line, looks great and also provides discounts at certain Minnesota Leather Pride events (see sidebar). Get yours while supplies last at participating businesses (see MNLeatherPride.org for details) and at Minnesota Leather Pride events.

The theme of this year's Minnesota Leather Pride celebration, "Perfect Union/Coming Together," was chosen to show Minnesota Leather Pride's support for marriage equality in Minnesota. Now that marriage equality is the law in Minnesota, this year's theme can signify celebration of that fact. □

SIDEBAR

Minnesota Leather Pride 2013 Events

Reminder: Visit MNLeatherPride.org for full details and the latest updates.

Friday, June 14: Electrical play demonstration presented by the Electrical Play Group. 8-10 P.M. Camp Bar, 490 N. Robert St., St. Paul.

Saturday, June 15: Recovery in the Lifestyle (RITL) meeting. Open to anyone living the leather/BDSM/fetish lifestyle in any Twelve-Step Recovery program. 7-9 P.M. Clare House, 3105 23rd Ave. S., Minneapolis.

Sunday, June 16: Unity Through Rope demonstration presented by MSDB. 2-5 P.M. Patrick's Cabaret, 3010 Minnehaha Ave. S., Minneapolis. \$10; discounts with 2013 Minnesota Leather Pride dog tag and for MSDB members. If desired, BYOR (bring your own rope).

Friday, June 21: Twin Cities Leather "Adventures in Fetish" fashion show and boot-black party. 7:30-9:30 P.M. Followed by **FUNdRaver! 2 rave dance party**, 10 P.M.-2 A.M. Southern Theater, 1420 Washington Ave. S., Minneapolis. \$10 for each event; discount with 2013 Minnesota Leather Pride dog tag or with combination admission to both events.

Saturday, June 22: Guest speaker Hardy Haberman presented by Leather Journey. 1-4 P.M. In The Heart of the Beast Theater, 1500 E. Lake St., Minneapolis. \$10; discount with 2013 Minnesota Leather Pride dog tag.

Sunday, June 23: Leather Pride Motorcycle Ride presented by Knights of Leather. 10 A.M. departure; meet at 1610 Harmon Place, Minneapolis.

Sunday, June 23: Leather Pride Bicycle Ride presented by PEPRMNT. 10 A.M. departure; meet on Midtown Greenway in front of



Freewheel Bike/Midtown Bike Center, 2834 10th Ave. S., Minneapolis.

Monday, June 24: BDSM Creative Collective presents readings from its 2013 Leather Pride Anthology of Art, Poetry, Photography, and Short Fiction. 7-9 P.M. Smitten Kitten, 3010 Lyndale Ave. S., Minneapolis.

Tuesday, June 25: Leather Pride Swap Meet presented by MAsT Twin Cities. 6:30-9:30 P.M. Camp Bar, 490 N. Robert St., St. Paul. No charge to shop; \$5 to vend.

Thursday, June 27: Cigar and Pipe Smoker presented by Atons of Minneapolis. 8-11 P.M. On the patio of the Minneapolis Eagle/Bolt/Bolt Underground complex, 515 Washington Ave. S., Minneapolis.

Friday, June 28: Floggapalooza presented by Knights of Leather. 9-11 P.M. Camp Bar, 490 N. Robert St., St. Paul.

Saturday, June 29: Visit the Minnesota Leather Pride booth at the Twin Cities Pride Festival. 9 A.M.-5 P.M. Loring Park, Minneapolis.

Sunday, June 30: March with the Minnesota leather/BDSM/fetish community contingent, and help carry the giant leather pride flag, in the **Ashley Rukes GLBT Pride Parade**. Meet at 10 A.M. at 3rd St. and Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis. Parade steps off at 11 A.M.

Also, visit the **Minnesota Leather Pride booth** at the Twin Cities Pride Festival. 9 A.M.-5 P.M. Loring Park, Minneapolis.

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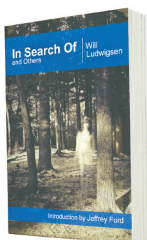
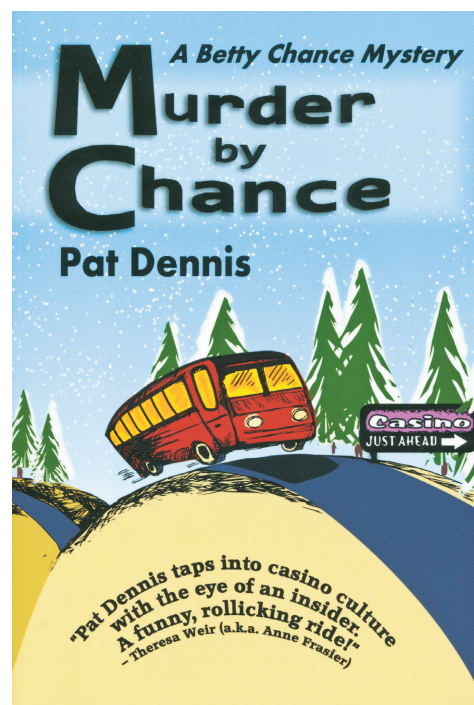
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MURDER BY CHANCE

Pat Dennis - Forty Press - \$16.95

A woman of a certain age and girth, unemployed and broke, Betty Chance risks all to start a casino gambling junket business with her niece Lori, and the expertise of ex-con bus driver Tillie. Take a Chance Tours is on its way, till the bus pulls up at Moose Lake Bay Resort one client shy. Not missing: dead in the coach loo. Author Dennis's other career is as a comedian and stand-up comic. Her written improv humor translates well to the page, imbuing her cast of characters with his or her own quirky personality. Of course, the trio set out to catch the killer, but each harbors secrets that must be aired before. You'll love Dennis's hi-speed motor-coach-on-steroids grand finale chase. A seriously funny killer ride.



IN SEARCH OF AND OTHERS

Will Ludwigsen - Lethe Press - \$15

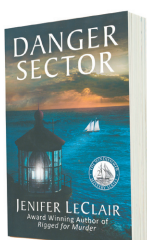
Ludwigsen's tales are just a bit...off. Not as in poorly written, but as in on target for keeping the reader off-kilter. Not surprisingly, one of his favorite TV shows back in the day was *In Search Of*, hosted by Leonard Nimoy, giving title to the book and the first story. Short and very short, I'd recommend these fifteen delectable stories not for a sunshiny beach read, but for after the sun has set and there's a whispering mist around the fire. Open at random to any-say, "Remembrance is Something Like a House," where a ramshackle death building creeps 800 miles to rectify an old wrong; or, "We Were Wonder Scouts," where a 13-year-old finds a lifetime of... Just take my advice and plunge in.



ONCE UPON A FLOCK: LIFE WITH MY SOULFUL CHICKENS

Lauren Scheuer - Atria Books - \$22.99

What better project for an artist, semi-pro carpenter and power tool aficionado than raising an eclectic flock of chickens? Once the idea hit author Scheuer, it was only a moment till she was at the drawing board designing coops and pondering over which birds to choose. Egg-layers, of course, so she did intensive research and the final cut came down to a Black Australorp (Jenny); a Barred Plymouth Rock (Lucy), a Buff Orpington (L'il White) and Rhode Island Red, Hatty. Book illustrator and blogger "Scratch and Peck"—Scheuer found herself, along with husband, teenaged daughter, and terrier Marky, immersed in the lives of four distinct feathered personalities. Her photo/drawing illustrations are superb and the entire tale one for suited for adults as well as children.



DANGER SECTOR

Jenifer LeClair - Conquill Press - \$15

Second in LeClair's engaging Windjammer Mystery series, *Danger Sector* finds her protagonist (and off-duty detective) Brie Beaumont and the crew of the schooner *Maine Wind* visiting Sentinel Island to help the captain's friend repair an old lighthouse he's inherited. But the previous owner, it turns out, died under mysterious circumstances, and another murder of a local artist follows on the heels of their arrival. Brie's investigations uncover island secrets buried for years, and as a nor'easter engulfs the island, Brie finds she is fighting for her very life. LeClair lives in Vadenais Heights, but has spent years sailing about Maine's islands and coastal regions, writing knowingly about the region and deftly capturing the idiosyncrasies of the isolated island characters. Watch for *Cold Coast* in July.

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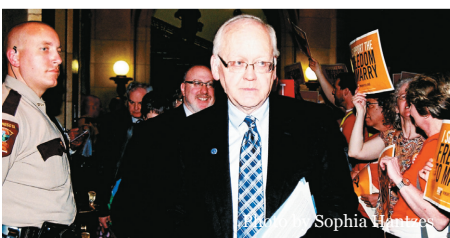


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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HF 1054: 75-59
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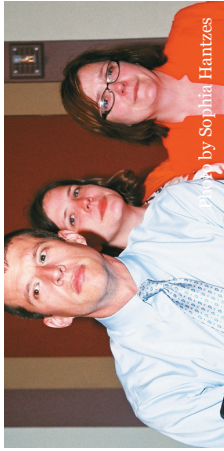


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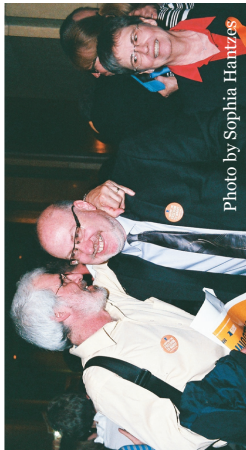


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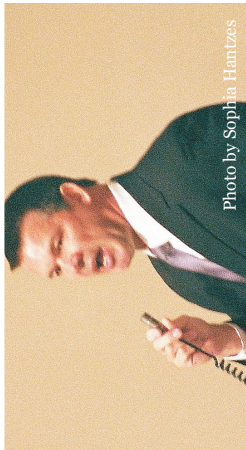


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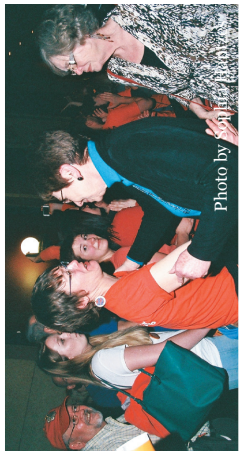


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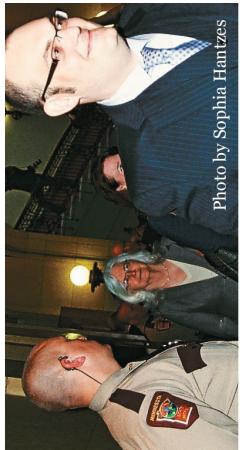


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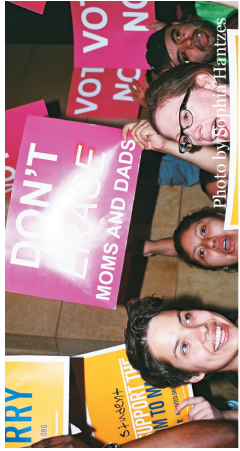


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MARRIAGE IN MN

SENATE SF 925: 37-30
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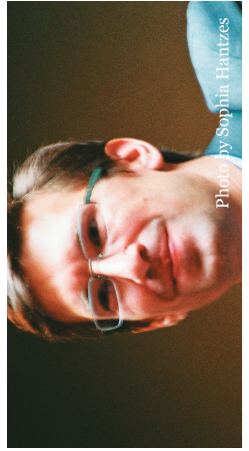
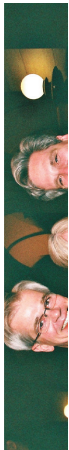
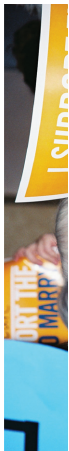


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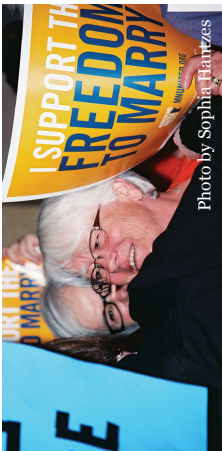


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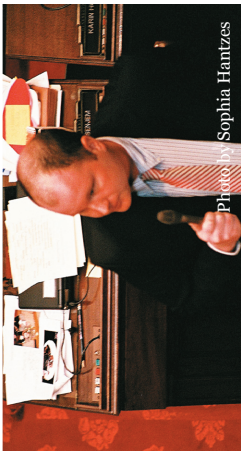


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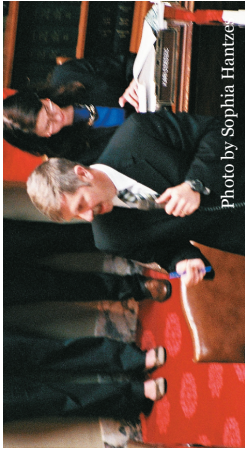


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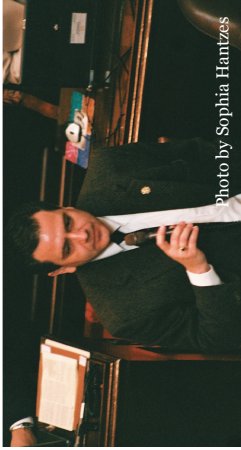


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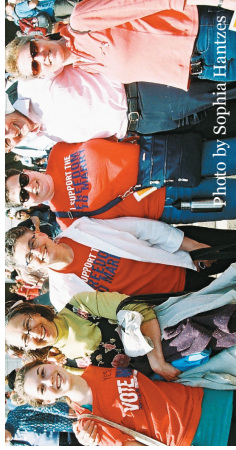


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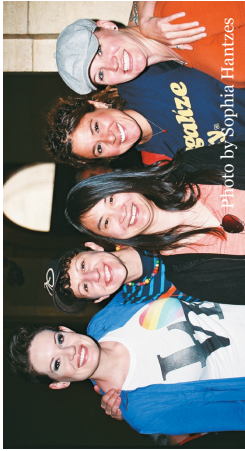


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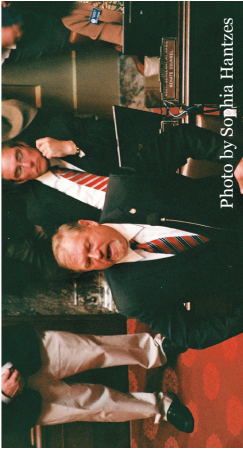


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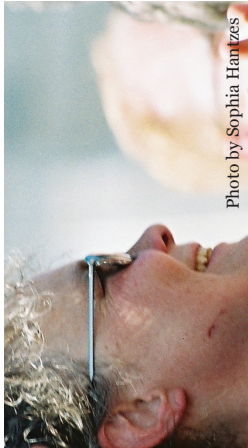


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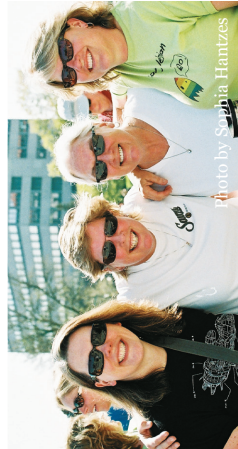


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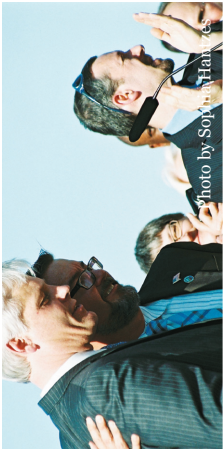


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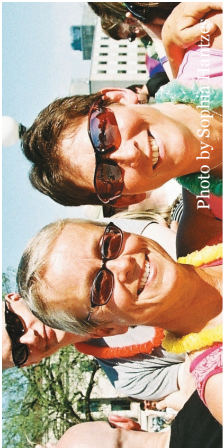


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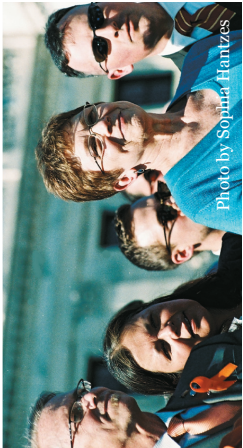


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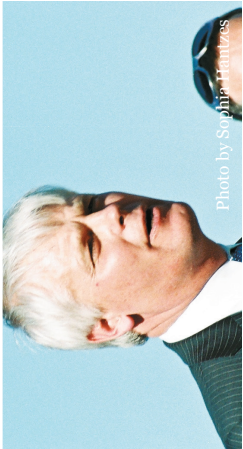


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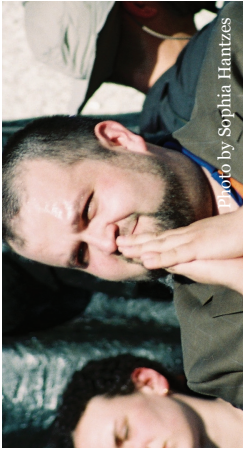


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SAINT PAUL'S "LOVE IS THE LAW" CONCERT
5.14.2013

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MARRIAGE VICTORY (FINALLY): The Historic Compromise

IT HAS finally been achieved in Minnesota. Marriage has arrived for GLBT couples. The effort was not without its ups and downs.

Within hours of the November 6, 2012, election victory over the proposed Minnesota Constitutional Amendment to ban gay marriage, DFL Governor Mark Dayton, DFL House Speaker Paul Thissen, DFL Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk, and DFL House Representative Erin Murphy held a press conference. Although they were celebrating the failure of the proposed constitutional amendment, gay marriage was simply not on their agenda for this legislative session.

Minnesotans United for All Families, Project 515, OutFront Minnesota, other groups, and individuals went on the offensive to promote and achieve marriage equality. In parallel, Lavender devoted a series of articles to persuade legislators to act now. The result was history being made.

The DFL would not pass a straightforward

"marriage" bill. Too many of its rural members were afraid of losing their jobs in the next election if they voted for "gay marriage". Ten DFL Senators and seventeen DFL Representatives saw their own districts support the mean-spirited amendment. Most DFLers would also not settle for the Republicans' "civil union" counter proposal. Few voices called for a middle ground approach during the marriage hearings at the Capitol. Above all, both major political parties' members feared that the widespread religious view of marriage could jeopardize their seats in the next election.

Then came the great compromise to tweak the name. That was easy. Instead of the DFL's "marriage" or the Republicans' "civil unions", "civil marriage" was deemed the happy medium. Risk-averse politicians could now run for reelection claiming that they did not back marriage, but rather "civil marriage". Religion was saved.

Let's thank the organizations that lobbied

for this advancement in our rights. Together we have overcome a large hurdle by this compromise. The seventy-five representatives and thirty-seven senators who embraced the bill also deserve our praise. Thank you and the governor for changing your minds since November 7, 2012.

More changes are needed to achieve total equality. Now that the community is leaps and bounds closer to the finish line, the focus must turn to the dozens of state laws that still discriminate against it. For example, nothing in the State Human Rights Act of 1993 is to be interpreted "to mean the state of Minnesota condones homosexuality or bisexuality or any equivalent lifestyle" or "to permit the promotion of homosexuality or bisexuality in education institutions."

Judging by the admirable resilience of the 2012-2013 actors toward marriage equality, legislators should brace for 2014. ◻

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I'll Take Civil Marriage for the Win!

NO ONE could be happier than I that gay marriage passed in Minnesota a couple of weeks ago. I'm thrilled we disproved my thesis in "The DFL's Big Gay Farce." Minnesotans United for All Families, Lavender, the GLBT community, and its allies first demanded, then cajoled, and finally persuaded the DFL and a few Republicans that our relationships are just as worthy of recognition as opposite-sex ones. We achieved marriage equality because we worked hard, we told our stories, and we made arguments that changed people's perceptions of us.

So, what did we achieve? Paul Tosto of MPR explains what the law says. In "Minn. Senate approves same-sex marriage: sends to Dayton," he reported:

"The legislation headed for the governor's desk changes the definition of marriage in Minnesota from 'between a man and a woman' to a civil contract between two persons. State prohibitions against marriage between an uncle or aunt and niece or nephew, or between first cousins, remain on the books.

The state will also recognize the unions of same-sex people who were married in other states and countries."

Essentially, the state will recognize all marriages strictly as civil contracts. By adding the word "civil" in front of marriage, it made the religious aspects of marriage purely a personal matter. The special relationship between two people is recognized and independent of religious influence. Starting August 1st, all marriages performed in the state

of Minnesota will be civil marriages.

This is fantastic and historic.

Now, I'd like to share the tale of my small part in this. You know I've been writing for the past seven months urging the legislature to pass something. I've worked to explain why this is needed, why we can't wait, and why we can't settle for getting nothing. I offer this explanation for a reason. Some have suggested I wasn't on board the train to same-sex marriage or that I've been trying to stop the train. That is simply not true. Here's my story.

Back in November of last year I wrote "The DFL's Big Gay Farce." This was intended to push the DFL into doing something. My thesis was without persuading and pushing that party into fulfilling an implicit promise they'd made to us, we wouldn't get our relationships recognized in this session, if ever. I have numerous quotes where all legislative leaders, the governor, and even some on our side said it may not happen. I wasn't going to go quietly into that good night. So I began writing articles.

By the beginning of March, I was getting quite nervous. Sen. Scott Dibble and Rep. Karen Clark had introduced their respective bills for same-sex marriage, but the DFL wasn't taking ownership of it. If the bill couldn't pass the house, the issue was dead. I'd been told a civil union bill was in the works but it hadn't been introduced. I felt I needed to do something. Something big.

I'd been reading some persuasive argument theories and sociological ideas when I

came across something I'd read in college. It was something called "rational choice theory." It's an economic theory that suggests individuals act in a rational way balancing rewards and punishments for the things they want and need. In other words, people use a kind of personal cost/benefit analysis to decide if something is worth the sacrifice for pleasure of it.

For example, I may want that big juicy steak but it is expensive and it will clog my arteries. I must then make a determination whether the benefit of the tasty steak is worth the cost to health and pocketbook. But this isn't just an economic theory. It has also been used to explain social interactions. We thank people because then they will continue doing nice things for us. We can also scold people if they do something that hurts us. Sometimes this motivates people to stop doing it.

Why couldn't I use this idea to motivate political actors as well? Then, I came upon this by John Scott in "Rational Choice Theory," *Understanding Contemporary Society: Theories of The Present*, edited by G. Brown, A. Halcli, and F. Webster, 2000:

"Rational choice theorists also recognise that the threat of punishment or the promise of a reward may motivate people just as much as the punishment or reward itself. The threat of punishment, for example, may call forth appropriate behaviour from those who wish to avoid the punishment. This assumption allowed Homans [the theory's creator] to recognise the motivating role of



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threats and inducements in the conditioning of human behaviour.”

There were simply not enough DFLers in the House to vote for same-sex marriage if those in rural areas didn’t agree. There wasn’t enough of a reward to get them to do so. There aren’t enough of us and we don’t have enough allies in those areas to either punish or induce them. We needed to get the DFL leadership to push the issue. This meant some kind of gambit to force them to take ownership of the issue and get it passed.

So, what would make the DFL feel they had to pass same-sex legislation? Obviously they would have our gratitude but then they already have the support of the GLBT community. What if they thought they’d lose out on this issue? If Republicans began to support my civil union proposal it could get the DFL to act.

Following my interview with Rep. Kieffer, she’d agreed to sponsor a civil union bill. She was getting others on board but they still hadn’t acted. If I could get the GOP to push for a compromise, would the DFL fold on it or would they push back and start twisting arms to get same-sex marriage passed?

I didn’t single-handedly perform sociological jujitsu on the DFL. Nor was I primarily motivated by these ideas. However, I did consider the following:

We needed a contingency plan. We needed to make some news. We needed the DFL to begin feeling a little bit nervous.

Because of all these reasons, I headed up to the state capital and testified for a civil union bill. If a bill was proposed, it would change the entire course of the conversation. No longer would it be all or nothing. It would become civil unions or marriage. It would mean we’d have something.

On April 3, 2013, Rep. Tim Kelly, along with Reps. Kieffer, Garofalo, McNamara, and DFL Rep. Kim Norton proposed a civil union bill. I want to thank each and every one of

them for their work on this. They faced an undeserved firestorm of heat. I especially want to thank Rep. Andrea Kieffer who has been a friend and ally. Along with Rep. Pat Garofalo, Kieffer ended up voting for the civil marriage bill. They deserve our support.

As a result of the civil union bill being introduced, House Speaker Paul Thissen finally committed. The same day the bill was introduced, Doug Belden of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* stated in “Minnesota GOP offers gay marriage alternative – civil unions”: “House Speaker Paul Thissen, DFL-Minneapolis, called civil unions ‘an idea whose time has passed and would simply create a new separate and unequal category for same-sex couples in our state.’”

I admit I didn’t even realize at the time this would tip the scales and force the DFL’s hand. Following the firestorm of condemnation, two weeks later Gov. Dayton began pressuring the DFL to pass the measure. According to Baird Helgeson’s “Gov. Dayton leads the call at Capitol to legalize same-sex marriage,” in the April 18, 2013, *StarTribune*:

“Gov. Mark Dayton made an impassioned case Thursday that same-sex couples should be allowed to marry in Minnesota, kicking off a frigid outdoor Capitol rally that intensified pressure on legislators to pass a marriage measure. ‘Yes to marriage, yes to same-sex marriage, yes to the constitutional right, the American right, to marry the person you love,’ Dayton told hundreds of cheering supporters.”

And then Dayton ramped up the pressure even more about a week later as told in Tom Scheck’s “Dayton ramps up lobbying efforts for same-sex marriage,” on MPR.org, May 1, 2013:

“I realize this is a difficult decision for many of them, especially in areas where their constituents supported the constitutional amendment,” Dayton told reporters after the meeting. ‘But I went back to John Kennedy’s

Profiles In Courage and said other people had to make a historic and momentous decisions, and they had to search their conscience for the right thing to do.’”

It was obvious the votes simply weren’t there. For the DFL governor to have met in private with the House DFL caucus meant the rural Democrats just weren’t biting, yet. And then, I had one last chance to make the DFL arm-twist their caucus into voting for same-sex marriage or civil unions or something.

Cyndi Brucato wanted to interview me about the issue.

Brucato offered me a forum that is frequented by many politicians. I wanted to give the DFL one last push and Minnpost.com was another place to get to them. By this time the DFL seemed to have committed to its passage but I wasn’t letting up on them until they had the votes. In the May 3rd interview, I once again questioned whether the DFL was really committed to this. Maybe I didn’t need to come on so strong. Maybe it helped make the arm-twisting that much more strenuous. We will never know. But I did it to make something happen.

And it did.

Now Randy and I can get married. We will do so next year. It will be even more special knowing I did what I could to make this happen. I did what I thought was right. I’d do so all over again. I am only a small part of this saga. Randy lifted me up when I was down, calmed me when I was terrified, and urged me to continue when I wanted to throw in the towel. I never would have gotten through this without him.

Without Minnesotans United for All Families, this would never have happened. Without the support of allies throughout the state, this couldn’t have passed. Without the many loud and passionate voices in the GLBT community, this law wouldn’t have been enacted. But, we all played a part. ■

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**MINNESOTA****Dayton Signs Same-Sex Marriage Law, Which Takes Effect August 1**

The Star Tribune reports that amid a cascade of cheers and applause, Gov. Mark Dayton legalized same-sex marriage in Minnesota on Tuesday surrounded by thousands of gay and lesbian supporters and advocates. The governor stated: "Progress has often been difficult, controversial and, initially, divisive. However, it has always been the next step ahead to fulfilling this country's promise to every American." The mayor of Minneapolis, R. T. Rybak, has stated that he will open the Minneapolis City Hall at 12:01 AM on the day the law takes effect, and that he will personally officiate wedding ceremonies for gay and lesbian couples wishing to marry.

MINNESOTA**Minnesota Senate Passes Same-Sex Marriage Bill**

NBC News reports that the Minnesota Senate gave final approval on Monday to a bill that will make the state the 12th in the United States to allow same-sex couples to marry and only the second in the Midwest. The bill, which passed by a margin of 37 to 30, is expected to be signed into law by Governor Mark Dayton on Tuesday, marking Minnesota as the only Midwestern state aside from Iowa to allow gay marriage.

1-USA**Most Americans Support Lifting Ban On Gay Boy Scouts**

The *Washington Post* reports that 63% of Americans support the Boy Scouts of America's proposal to allow gay scouts to join. This is a large increase compared to last year's *USA Today* poll where only 42% said openly gay adults should be able to serve as leaders. Respondents who are free from religion are the strongest supporters of gay scouts and gay scouts masters.

MINNESOTA**Mayor Chris Coleman Proclaims "Freedom to Marry Week" in Saint Paul**

StPaul.gov reports that Mayor Chris Coleman issued a proclamation making this week the "Freedom to Marry Week" in the City of Saint Paul. Chris Coleman said: "Becoming the first Midwest state in the country to legislatively legalize the freedom to marry is an event worth celebrating."

FLORIDA**One Million Moms Attacks Disney for Unofficial Gay Days at Walt Disney World**

Pink News reports that the group of Christian mothers called One Million Moms is outraged at Disney after Gay Days organizers said the event would take place in Walt Disney World. Although Disney repeats year after year that it doesn't sponsor the event, One Million Moms emailed a complaint that reads: "Homosexuals will be celebrating the 23rd anniversary of Gay Day wearing matching Gay Day merchandise, such as T-shirts. There will also be transvestites dressed in drag showing their support for the event. This event is planned with the intent to expose and desensitize children to this lifestyle by same-sex couples holding hands, hugging and kissing."

WISCONSIN**Wisconsin Unlikely To Follow Minnesota's Lead On Gay Marriage**

The *LaCrosse Tribune* reports that Wisconsin is not likely to follow suit anytime soon on legalizing same-sex marriage, despite the actions of neighboring states and shifting public sentiment. In 2006, Wisconsin voters approved a constitutional amendment that defined marriage as between one man and one woman, and reversing it could take nearly a decade. While recent polls in the state have shown some substantial growth in support for same-sex marriage, the numbers are still much lower than the majority that would be needed to overturn the amendment.

**2-CUBA****Castro Daughter Leads Cuba March For Gay Rights**

USA Today reports that about 500 people have marched through the Cuban capital to the rhythm of conga drums in an early celebration of the international day against homophobia. Mariela Castro, the daughter of President Raul Castro, is head of the National Sexual Education Center and a vocal campaigner for gay rights in Cuba, a country that has historically persecuted homosexuals, especially in the 1960s.

3-RUSSIA:**23-Year-Old Raped And Murdered After Coming Out As Gay**

The *Raw Story* reports that a 23-year-old man has been tortured to death in Russia in an apparent homophobic attack, investigators said Sunday, amid growing fears by rights groups that anti-gay sentiments are on the rise in the country. The young man, who was beaten so badly that he could not initially be identified, was assaulted by two men, one of which has a prior criminal record, in the incident that occurred last Friday in Volgograd. Russia has been notorious in its discrimination towards GLBT people, and the Russian parliament voted earlier this year to ban what it terms "homosexual propaganda". □



FORD FUSION

Photos by Randy Stern

IN PREVIOUS reviews for this car, the label “sexy” has been applied to it.

“Sexy?” How can a mid-sized family sedan, promising seating for five and fuel efficiency, be considered “sexy”?

There are plenty of explanations. The previous Ford Fusion was the complete opposite. It had to be more mainstream since it had to establish itself in the mid-sized family sedan market. The old Taurus was left for dead in the fleet markets by 2006,

giving the Fusion a fighting chance to replace it. The previous Fusion was highly successful, giving Ford some footing in a highly competitive segment.

However, the Fusion needed a follow-up. It needed style to go along with its success. Ford decided to meld the Fusion with another successful car – a European executive sedan called the Mondeo. The new Fusion became part of the OneFord strategy – combining all products sold in a singular

segment as a singular vehicle. Therefore, we are not just looking at the new Fusion, but, rather, a true global powerhouse with some very “sexy” lines.

Consumers and fleet owners already responded to the “sexy” new Fusion in North America. Sales are good for Ford and mainstream buyers are once again taking a chance at something unconventional – rather, Kinetic (as in the OneFord design language) – that still wears the blue oval

badge. In April of 2013, the Fusion was the third best selling passenger car in the USA.

While Ford consumers are proving the Fusion's worth in this hotly contested segment, how does it stack up against its competition? Rather, is this truly the best front-drive, mid-sized Ford ever?

Just like the Taurus of 1986 vintage, it does take some retina adjustment to get used to the new Fusion's styling. The long, sleek lines start from grille up front reminiscent of an Aston Martin – a company once owned by Ford. If there was not the third glass behind the rear door, you could almost think it is an Aston Martin Rapide – a compliment indeed! Nonetheless, it aspires to be a different take on the mid-sized car and it succeeds beautifully.

Rearward, some grumbled that it looked like a Fiesta or a Focus in the back. Obviously, no one understood how the Kinetic design language was supposed to work. It is a family rear end with a rather small deck lid. It does work, as behind the deck lid is a huge trunk worth throwing a weekend worth of stuff for four people. Five-spoke, seventeen-inch alloy wheels finish off the upgraded SE model's look.

Step inside and you will be absolutely surprised. One might think there would be some loss in interior space given the low-slung roof. Not so. A tall driver will find a comfortable and engaging place behind the wheel. A cockpit-like driving space is right for the control needed to take the Fusion on any road. Compliment that with rightly bolstered leather seats that adjust in various ways for any driver. Though it is a mid-sized family sedan, it certainly feels like a driver's car.

Though it feels like a driver's car, the real battle for superiority in the mid-sized family sedan segment is in the rear seat. The Fusion does not disappoint with plenty of legroom for average adults. Do not let the fast-back-style roof line fool you, since headroom

stops for six footers. Cabin comfort is very good and active all around.

The latest Ford elements are present on the instrument panel. The center speedometer is flanked with two customizable TFT screens, while the main MyFord Touch screen is ever present in the center stack. Unlike the latest Kinetic design Fords, the instrument panel seems a bit restrained design-wise. However, this is a huge plus, because the interior is straightforward and more functional to use.

Between SYNC and MyFord Touch, sound is sent through six speakers positioned cleverly throughout the cabin. Speakers are even crafted into the upper parts of the doors with the grille integrating the power lock switches flowing to the door latch. You get SiriusXM along with the possibilities of SYNC connections from your portable devices. Bluetooth streaming for phones and music on smart devices is seamless.

What makes the Fusion more of a driver's car is the 1.6 liter EcoBoost turbocharged four-cylinder engine. With 173-178 horsepower on tap – depending on the kind of fuel you pour into the tank – it motivates the Fusion quite well. However, it is the 184 pound-feet of torque that will make you a true believer. The absence of turbo lag alone will make a lot of drivers very happy. This EcoBoost came with a six-speed automatic transmission sending power to the front wheels and a stop-start system that is truly unobtrusive. This drive line is an absolute win overall.

Augmenting the fine EcoBoost drive line is a set of driving dynamics that befits the efficient turbo's mission – and exceeds it. Through post-winter road surfaces full of exposed gaps and potholes, the Fusion's suspension made easy work of these imperfections by absorbing everything it was served. Nothing shook through the cabin – and this is a good thing in this segment. The Fusion offered a very smooth ride on

the better surfaces. Handling was fantastic with minimal body roll and lean in the corners. This thing loves to track through everything and does not mind being chucked around when challenged.

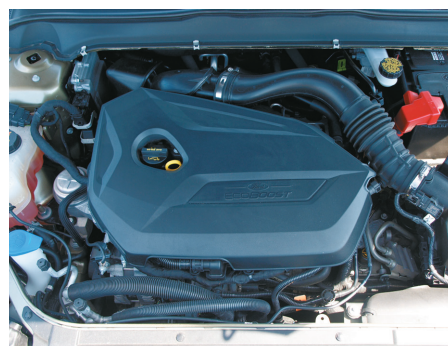
The key to this great handling package is an accurate and perfectly weighted steering system. The Fusion holds the road, but could feel light when it is stuck in a straight line on the highway. Brakes are very good – action is right with accurate stopping power in both normal and panic situations.

The big selling point for the 1.6 liter EcoBoost is fuel economy. With the power equal to its competition, one would hope it would also be equal in terms of consumption. The Fusion turned a fuel economy average of 28.7MPG – which is considered “not bad” these days. Actually, that figure is much more livable than what the non-hybrid Fusions used to average in my care.

The Fusion lineup starts at about \$22,000. This well-equipped SE model, several upgrades through packaging and other active safety equipment, brought the sticker to \$30,975. There are two grades of Hybrids available – in SE and Titanium – along with the addition of the Energi plug-in model, for those looking for more sustainability out of their Fusion.

In all, Ford simply nailed the new Fusion. It starts with a fresh look designed to inject some soul back into the mid-sized family sedan and ends with a rewarding driving experience for everyone on board. You responded to it by taking delivery at a clip of over 20,000 units per month – making this a leader amongst passenger cars, period.

Going out on a limb here, this could be the most important Ford sedan to come along since the introduction of the 1986 Taurus. Forget whether it has front wheel drive or its size and class designation – the Fusion is drawing you back to Ford by standing out in a crowd and making people notice as one drives by. ■





Lily

LILY SWALLOWED and returned her near-empty beer to the tabletop. A half second and quarter smile later, she said, “God, Dad, even when I was a kid, you’d say how it’s important to be able to giggle with someone.”

We were across from each other at an outside bar at close to eleven on the first good weather night of 2013 celebrating our first public drink together since Lily turned twenty-one.

We were also dissecting my most recent failed attempt at romance.

“It was frustrating,” I offered. “He had a big heart and treated me like a queen. But he couldn’t make me laugh.”

“Don’t worry about it, Dad. I understand why you told him it wasn’t working.”

I shifted from self-pity to inquisitive parent and asked about upcoming finals and an impending overseas trip. Lily volunteered about various dorm life dramas, some of which she helped to spawn. We talked politics and family and reminisced about what life had been like in Iowa, where she lived with me for three years post-divorce.

I have two daughters, with Lily being the younger. She’s Korean and adopted, which means that she had tremendous baggage even before I held her for the first time at five months old. Lily also had some serious health challenges while in Korea, which she survived—I’m convinced—solely through the power of the human spirit. That spirit’s never ebbed for Lily, which has made for one very persistent, and at times extremely passionate, infant-adolescent-teenager-young woman.

“Be honest,” Lily started. “What do you think about my haircut?”

By then, we were on our second round of drinks. I looked at my daughter’s jet black hair and crescent moon eyes. What had been shoulder-length hair was now a pageboy cut.

“Very cute,” I answered, meaning it too, but also missing a look that I’d long been accustomed to.

I’ll admit it: I’m not always great with change.

Lily, on the other hand, can handle change with deft. After all, she went from a loving and safe nuclear family to a father moving out so that he could explore his gender and sexual identities. Five years later, “Ed” and “Dad,” became “Ellen.” All of that caused serious trauma for family and friends, yet Lily remained a steadfast ally.

“I understand,” she said as the disruptions in her former wonderful life began. She was young then—real young, barely age twelve. I thought, *How in the world can you understand?*

Yet, she moved in with me in 9th grade, and began to meet my GLBT friends. She soon became the only straight kid in her high school gay-straight alliance group.

When her mother persisted in calling me “Ed,” Lily, then eighteen, intervened. “You need to respect Dad,” she told my ex, Lydia. “His name is Ellen now and that’s what you need to call him.” She even extracted Lydia’s promise to use “Ellen” from that moment forward.

Lily’s advocacy worked. Ever since, Lydia has only called me “Ellen.”

Oh, Lily! What a gift, pronouns notwithstanding.

It’s not always been easy. Lily and I are both strong-willed—that’s putting it mildly—which has made for many heated moments and shed tears. Both of us are prone to yelling, regretful words, and pushed buttons. Occasionally, we’ve needed time-outs away from each other.

Still, we’ve always doubled back to forgive and forget. Which, in part, is what made our first drinks out in public so special.

Like I’ll-never-forget-this-moment special.

As the night grew older, Lily reminded me about Door County where the Krug family had made a thousand other good memories a decade ago. In an instant, I was back in Door, with Lydia and our two daughters. Lily brought up how after dinner, we’d walk to the hotel on a quiet blacktopped lane in the chilling mid-August night. Street lights were set far apart, meaning that our shadows would grow larger and larger on the blacktop.

Sooner or later, one of us would hop on a shadow and then another yelling, “Got your shadow!” Ten seconds later, there would be four Krugs shadow-stomping and exclaiming, “Can’t catch me” or “I want to catch someone’s shadow, Daddy!”

The moments we cherish are like wispy shadows—present one minute and gone the next.

Some people can be that way, too.

But not Lily. □

Ellie Krug is the author of *Getting to Ellen: A Memoir about Love, Honesty and Gender Change*. She welcomes your comments at ellenkrugwriter@gmail.com



The Spoon Crisis

I OPENED the utensil drawer this morning to get a spoon for my yogurt. But there were none. So, I opened the dishwasher. There were no spoons there, either.

I walked into the living room and found my girlfriend Wendy eating yogurt with a spoon. And then I said, quite calmly given the circumstances, “The spoon situation in this house has become dire.”

I then flipped open my laptop and began writing a column about the spoon crisis.

“Oh, no you don’t!” said Wendy, slapping my laptop shut. “You are NOT writing a column about this. You are NOT going to make me out to be an absent-minded spoon-losing professor. You are just as responsible for the spoon situation.”

And, in a way, she’s correct. While she is 100% guilty of losing every one of my spoons (the spoon she was using with her yogurt was one she stole from her office in a sloppy attempt to cover her crime), I am responsible for creating the circumstances that allowed her to treat my utensils in such a cavalier manner.

Regular readers of this column (are there any?) will note that I have demonstrated a shocking display of intimacy issues over the years. I would no sooner let anyone get close enough to lose my utensils as I would to let them steal my heart.

But over the years, my boundaries have been weakened. Wendy and her son began their brave exploration of my unmapped and treacherous emotional terrain almost five years ago. They ignored all warning signs and the monumental failures of those who ventured before them, and firmly planted their flag deep into my heart.

It hurt a lot at first—as would any sharp stake in the heart—and I resisted. But since I couldn’t deal with the pain on an emotional level, I focused on the mess they created around me. I’d yell at them for piling dirty clothes on top of freshly laundered ones. I’d sigh heavily each time they spit toothpaste in the sink without rinsing it away. I’d stomp my foot dramatically each time I’d go to find an object, only to discover that one of them had put it somewhere it didn’t belong. But my tantrums had no effect on them. They’d simply shrug me off and keep doing whatever the hell they wanted to do.

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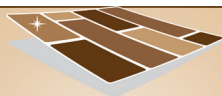
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DATELAND |

And as I slowly surrendered and let them conquer me on the physical front, my emotional core weakened, as well. First their clothes and Xboxes began to take up space in my home, and now they do. Up until this month, we lived together only part-time. She had her place and I had mine. But, now, we live together full-time. And, as a result, I have no spoons.

I have no idea what they do with the spoons. There has been some nonsensical explanation that I won't go into because I refuse to give voice to their twisted logic that leads them to point fingers in my direction. Because I can assure you that I have never removed a spoon from the house.

I think I should be given a lot of credit for dealing with the spoon situation with such grace. Even a year ago, Wendy's blatant disregard for my silverware would have been grounds for a breakup. But I've grown. And, now, all I want is to live the rest of my life with this smart, nurturing, and extremely careless woman and her equally irresponsible but exceedingly clever and loveable son.

They will continue to misplace my stuff and annoy me. But, instead of kicking them to the curb, I'm buying a very large box of plastic spoons. And I will continue to write columns about their many crimes, as this is my only remaining line of defense. If they don't like it, they can get their own column. □



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Body Pillows and Cross-Dressing

Dear Ms. Behavior:

My girlfriend recently came home with this new addition to our love bed: a body pillow. The five-foot-long pillow is like having another person in the bed with us! Between the bolster under the knees for back support, the microwavable herbal stress-relieving neck beanbag, the posture-perfect head pillow, and now the body pillow, there's barely any room for me. Do you think she is trying to send me a message? We already have a king-sized bed, so where do we go from here?

—PILLOW TALK

Dear Pillow Talk:

Your girlfriend has created a nest that sounds more like a room in a physical rehabilitation facility than a place you'd sleep or have sex. It sounds like your girlfriend is in pain, or like she at least needs comfort. Can you help her with this? If you're not into giving her the occasional massage, try to at least not complain about all of the self-healing objects if possible, but instead frame your request in a positive way. And then if you can't convince her to ditch the gigantic pillow by saying that you'd actually love to be closer to her, maybe you can have some fantasy fun in which you're, say, a terribly un-boundaried physical therapist.

Dear Ms. Behavior:

I dropped in on my new boyfriend Jack when he didn't expect me and I saw something that surprised me: Jack was vacuuming his house while wearing women's underwear! (They were pink and lacy and surprisingly see-through.) When he saw me—which was after I'd already seen him, since the vacuum was making a lot of noise—he quickly threw on a bathrobe. He didn't mention the underwear, but his face was red. I feel disturbed about the whole situation, but feel that it would be impolite to ask questions since I barged in on his private time. He usually dresses in masculine clothes and wears plaid boxer shorts. I'm not opposed to cross-dressing, but I've never known anyone who does it. But within the context of our dating, I just wonder about whether or not this an inappropriate secret for him to keep from his new boyfriend. Also, is it a fetish? Would he have told me eventually? Should I say anything?

—PREFER BOXERS

Dear Prefer Boxers:

Jack clearly wasn't ready to share his panty preference with you at this point. He may have wanted to wait until, say, your six-month anniversary to break out the lacy Victoria's Secret bikini ensemble, or until

he felt safe enough to have determined that you wouldn't think he was a freak. Or, maybe he never would have shared this particular interest with you because it's something he enjoys doing on his own. It's not "inappropriate" for Jack to have something he enjoys doing privately, although vacuuming in women's lingerie may be less conventional than a hobby like roller blading or knitting. (But be real; you probably have some private interests, too, sexual or otherwise.)

Your discovery of Jack's hobby is an opportunity for self-examination. Think about how it affected you to see your boyfriend in women's underwear. What does it mean about your view of masculinity/femininity and sexuality? Will it affect how you feel about Jack? As far as discussing it with him, you should ask questions if they'll otherwise be in the way of your relationship. Or, if you realize that you'd like to watch him do it again. □

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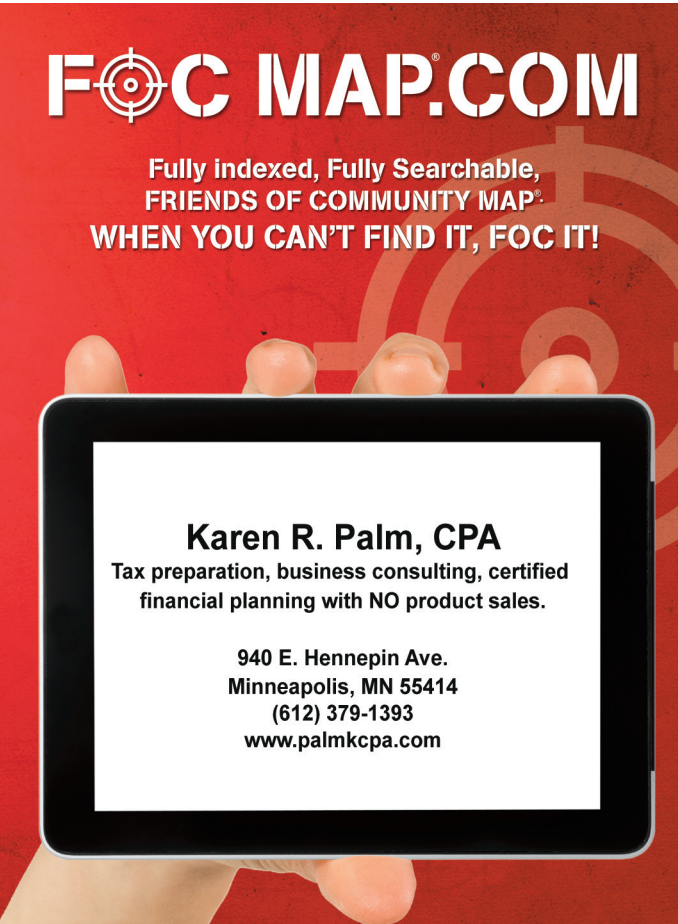
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String Theory

HISTORY IS an enigmatic thing. Upon it we look to see people who remind us of ourselves, maybe more naive, maybe more energetic. These are people we see in photographs and with whom we share fond memories. They talk like us, have similar mannerisms, laugh the same, and look a little like us, too; one ignorant to the truth might pass us off as father and son (or mother and daughter). But the people we see in our photographs are hardly related.

We are not who we were, and we are not who we are going to be.

You will carry always with you the lessons and memories you and your past-tense self lived. You will share the same personality, the same DNA, the same talents, and most certainly the same effects of your formative years. But there is one variable that changes it all: the inability to interact. Time.

Acclaimed theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking and scientists who share his belief in Superstring Theory believe that around us exist parallel dimensions in which reside an infinite number editions of life. As I write this letter to you from my bedroom, the theory suggests that I'm surrounded by a million other Justins, some who are writing this to you at different speeds, some looking out of my window, some gussying up to go out,

others ugly-crying for some silly reason. In my room right now I am surrounded by every possible eventuality that brought me to where I am. But I will never meet these other Justins. We live in separate dimensions, and with many of them I share everything, but we are completely unrelated.

Time works this way I think. We often tease ourselves with introspective cocktail-smart questions like "If you had to tell your childhood self one thing, what would it be?" But of course we'll never have the chance. Just as we never will meet our string theory counterparts, and though with many of them we share so much, we'll never meet the people we were.

Were we the same people then as we are now, we could avoid everything in the world we knew would break our hearts. Regret would be a fiction.

This leads us to identify the people we can change: us, unborn.

I talk to too many people who think it's Too Late. It's too late to study for the final exam you bombed. It's too late to pursue your career as a doctor. It's too late to find love. And, yes, it is too late to do a lot of things.

What happens though is that we let Regret, a thing born from our inability to interact with and warn our pasts of future missteps, dictate the paths we will take next.

Regret is the most heartbreaking thing in the world, and it serves as the ultimate demotivating factor. It brings us "experience" and "wisdom," and it makes us "mature."

I noticed one day that my ex was acting strangely. I had to wrestle from him the reason why, and it shook me. He said, "Justin, I'm 30 years old, and this isn't where I wanted to be. I wanted to have this life that I don't have now. I wanted to have a family by now."

Ouch. Ok, I think, maybe I shouldn't have asked, but then he continues: "It's just... Justin, you're not a nurturing person."

His words hurt me, of course. I know I'm not affectionate. I'm terrible at romantic things, I'm not good with children, and my priorities oftentimes are not in order. We broke up a couple of months later, but his words stuck.

Where do I want to be when I'm 30? Where do you see yourself at 40, 50, 60? And if you haven't achieved the future you want when it arrives, will it derail you? Will you look to the hopeful you that you once were with resentment?

Or will you change the person you will become?

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